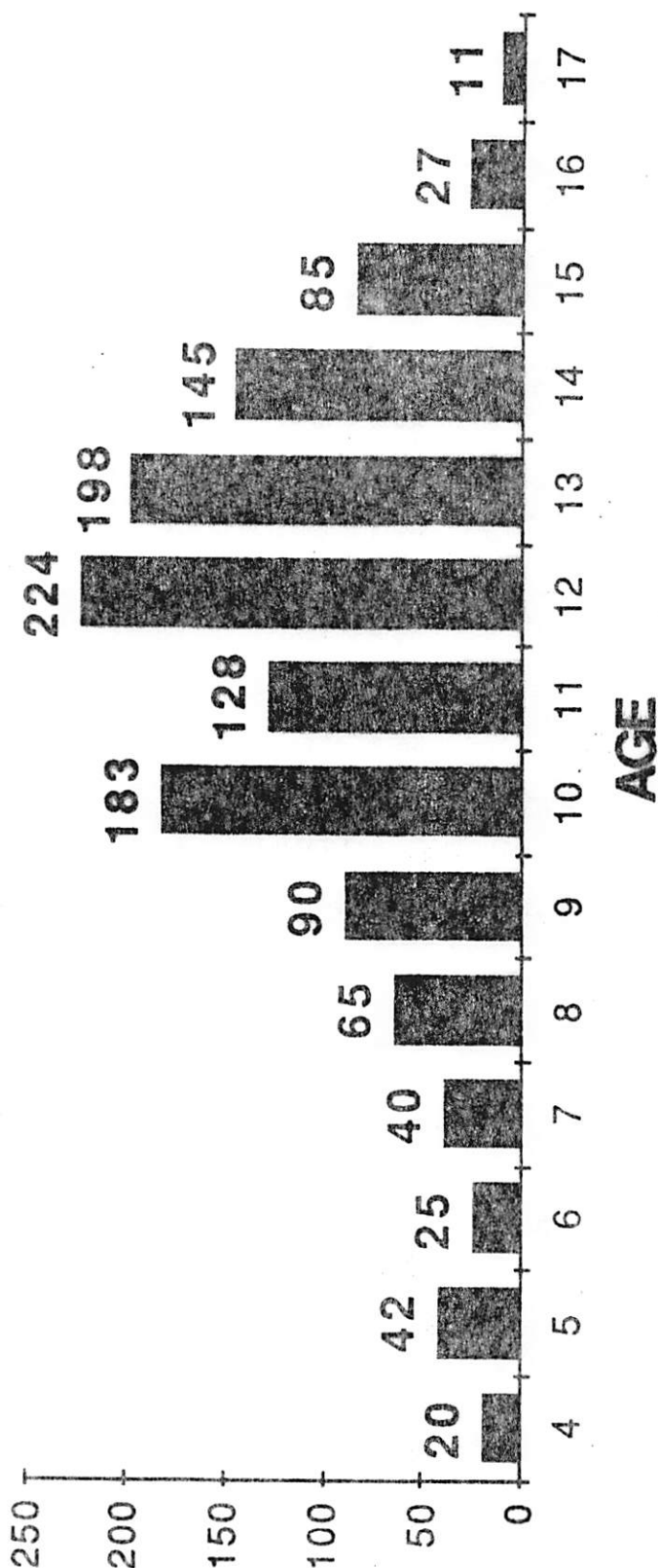


# AGE FIRST USED SMOKELESS TOBACCO

RESPONDENTS  
NUMBER OF



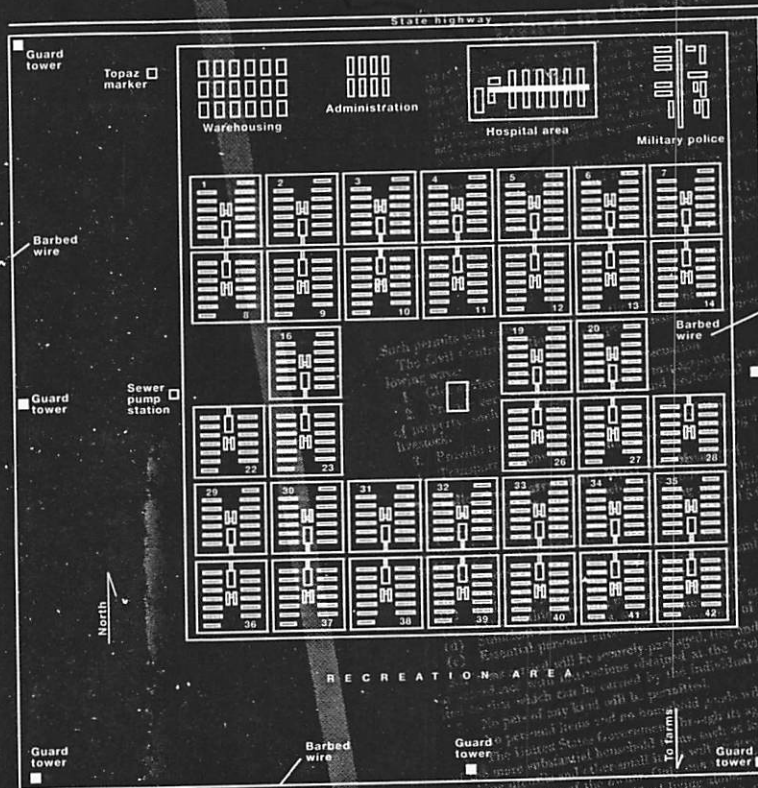


WESTERN MILITARY COMMAND AND FOURTH  
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION  
Presidio of San Francisco, California  
May 3, 1942



TOPAZ INTERNMENT CAMP 1942-1945

INSTRUCTIONS  
TO ALL PERSONS OF  
JAPANESE  
ANCESTRY



The Japanese-American  
Relocation Center  
in Utah during World War II

# THE PRICE OF PREJUDICE

By Leonard J. Arrington



**WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY  
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION**

Presidio of San Francisco, California  
May 3, 1942

**INSTRUCTIONS  
TO ALL PERSONS OF  
JAPANESE  
ANCESTRY**

**Living in the Following Area:**

All of that portion of the County of Alameda, State of California, within the boundary beginning at the point where the southerly limits of the City of Oakland meet San Francisco Bay; thence southerly and following the southerly limits of said city to U. S. Highway No. 50; thence southerly and westerly on said Highway No. 50 to its intersection with California State Highway No. 21; thence southerly on said Highway No. 21 to its intersection, at or near Warm Springs, with California State Highway No. 17; thence southerly on said Highway No. 17 to the Alameda-Santa Clara County line; thence westerly and following said county line to San Francisco Bay; thence northerly, and following the shoreline of San Francisco Bay to the point of beginning.

Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 34, this Headquarters, dated May 3, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above area by 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Saturday, May 9, 1942.

No Japanese person living in the above area will be permitted to change residence after 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Sunday, May 3, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the representative of the Commanding General, Northern California Sector, at the Civil Control Station located at:

920 "C" Street,  
Hayward, California.

Such permits will only be granted for the purpose of uniting members of a family, or in cases of grave emergency.

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property, such as real estate, business and professional equipment, household goods, boats, automobiles and livestock.
3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence.

**The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:**

1. A responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone, will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions. This must be done between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Monday, May 4, 1942, or between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Tuesday, May 5, 1942.
2. Evacuees must carry with them on departure for the Assembly Center, the following property:
  - (a) Bedding and linens (no mattress) for each member of the family;
  - (b) Toilet articles for each member of the family;
  - (c) Extra clothing for each member of the family;
  - (d) Sufficient knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls and cups for each member of the family;
  - (e) Essential personal effects for each member of the family.

All items carried will be securely packaged, tied and plainly marked with the name of the owner and numbered in accordance with instructions obtained at the Civil Control Station. The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group.

3. No pets of any kind will be permitted.
4. No personal items and no household goods will be shipped to the Assembly Center.
5. The United States Government through its agencies will provide for the storage, at the sole risk of the owner, of the more substantial household items, such as iceboxes, washing machines, pianos and other heavy furniture. Cooking utensils and other small items will be accepted for storage if crated, packed and plainly marked with the name and address of the owner. Only one name and address will be used by a given family.
6. Each family, and individual living alone, will be furnished transportation to the Assembly Center or will be authorized to travel by private automobile in a supervised group. All instructions pertaining to the movement will be obtained at the Civil Control Station.

**Go to the Civil Control Station between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Monday, May 4, 1942, or between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Tuesday, May 5, 1942, to receive further instructions.**

J. L. DEWITT  
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army  
Commanding

TWENTY-FIFTH FACULTY HONOR LECTURE



THE  
JAPANESE-AMERICAN  
RELOCATION CENTER  
IN UTAH  
DURING WWII







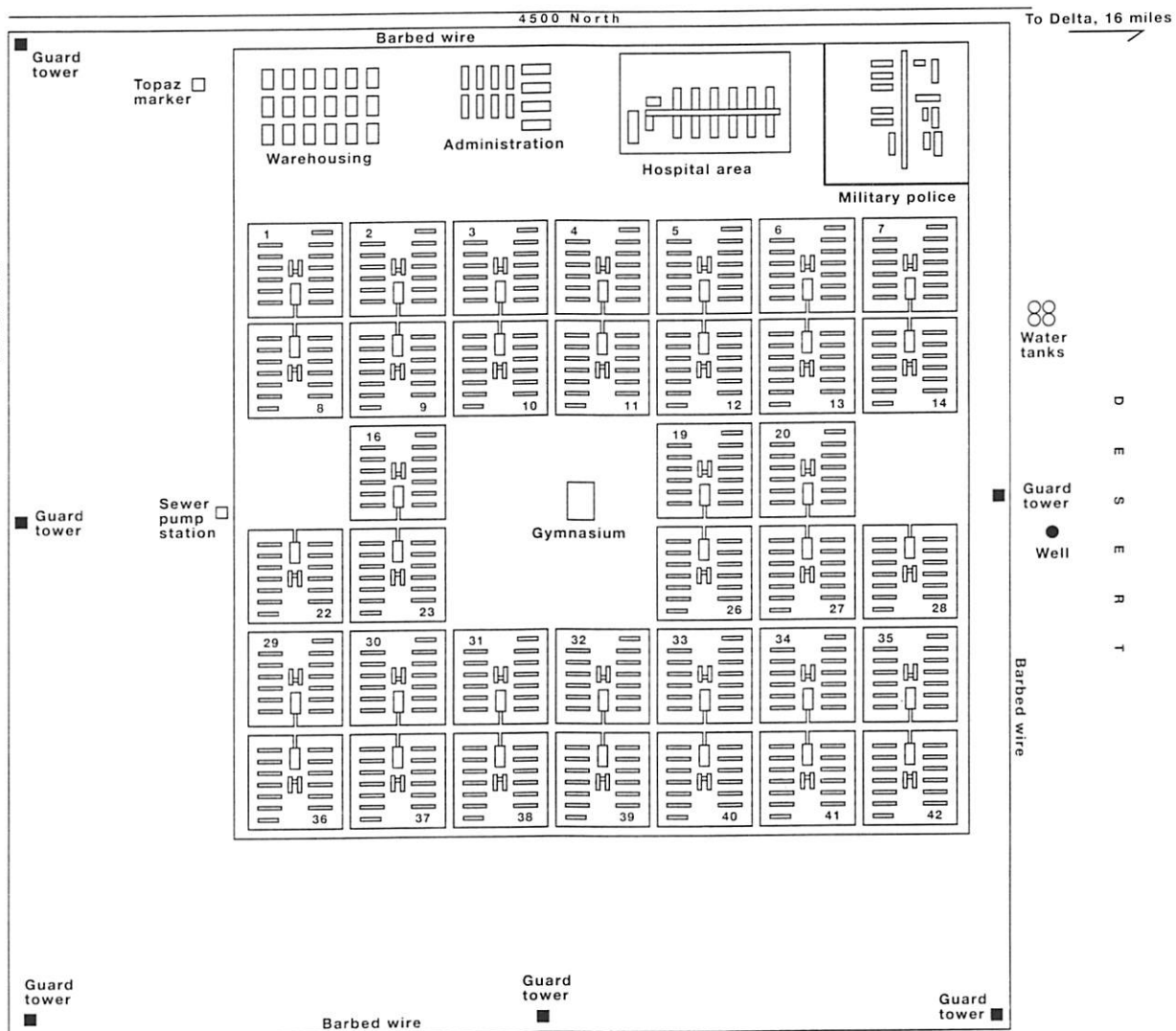
BY

LEONARD J. ARRINGTON

PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS

THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION  
UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
LOGAN, UTAH 1962

# PLAN OF TOPAZ INTERNMENT CAMP 1942-1945



D E S E R T

#### *A note on terminology*

During WWII, the US government utilized various terms to describe internment. "*Evacuation, relocation, assembly center*" and "*evacuee*" were all used extensively. It is now generally accepted by historians and scholars that these terms have benign and even beneficial connotations which the government used to its advantage. For example, "*evacuation*" is generally used when a natural disaster is imminent and residents are removed for their own protection.

Rather than "*evacuation*" or "*relocation*," the following terms for this event are more accurate: "*imprisonment, incarceration, internment, detention, confinement or lockup*." Rather than "*assembly center*," the term "*temporary internment center*" is an accurate alternative; rather than "*relocation camps*," "*internment camps, detention camps, prison camps, or concentration camps*" is more accurate; rather than "*evacuee*," "*detainee, internee, inmate or prisoner*" is more accurate. This is based on a comparison of the dictionary definitions of such terms and the documented facts of this historic period.

The most glaring example of the government's use of euphemism is found on the internment poster of the Western Defense Command which instructs that "*. . . all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, be excluded . . .*" Upon reflection, it is clear that "*non-alien*" refers to U.S. born, American citizens whose constitutionally guaranteed rights should have prevented such an internment.

For purposes of historical accuracy, none of the original terms have been changed in the Arrington text. However, the reader is asked to be aware of the subtleties in meaning and to be mindful that the 110,000 people were kept behind barbed wire by armed guards and were not able to walk out of camp at will.

*The Topaz Museum Board*

*How could such a tragedy have occurred in  
a democratic society that prides itself on  
individual rights and freedoms? . . .*

*I have brooded about this whole episode on  
and off for the past three decades . . .*

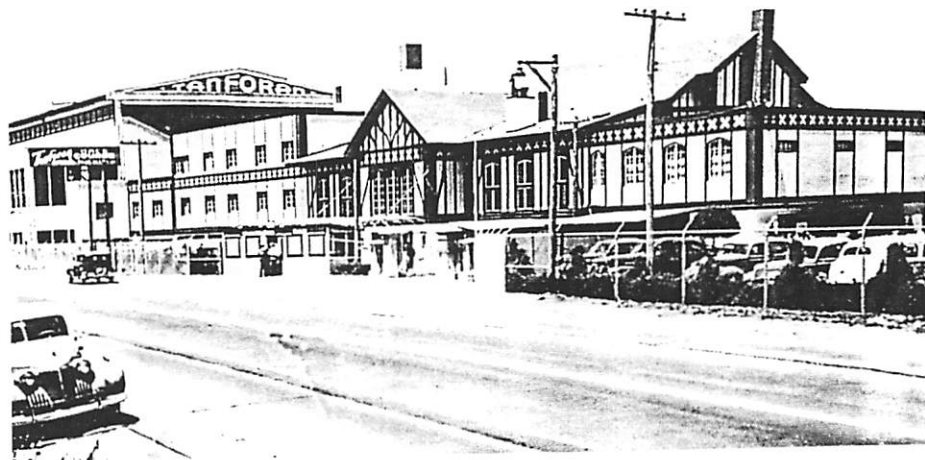
MILTON S. EISENHOWER



**W**hen the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, about 127,000 persons of Japanese descent were living in the United States, of whom more than 112,000 were on the Pacific Coast. These could be conveniently divided into three groups: the Issei or immigrants born in Japan; the Nisei or American-born, American-educated children of the Issei; and the Kibei, who were born in America but received some of their education in Japan.

Permanently excluded from becoming American citizens by United States law, and seriously limited in their ability to acquire agricultural and residential property by alien land laws, the 40,000 Issei had nevertheless lived here for more than twenty-five years, had raised their children and achieved a recognized position in the retail and wholesale distribution of fruits and vegetables in California, and displayed every intention of remaining here with their children to live out their days in peace and comfort.

The 70,000 Nisei, on the other hand, were predominantly teenagers and young adults, and in speech, dress, and manner, as well as in ideals and attitudes, were indistinguishable from other Americans of the same age. Twenty thousand of the Nisei had been to Japan at some time or other, mostly



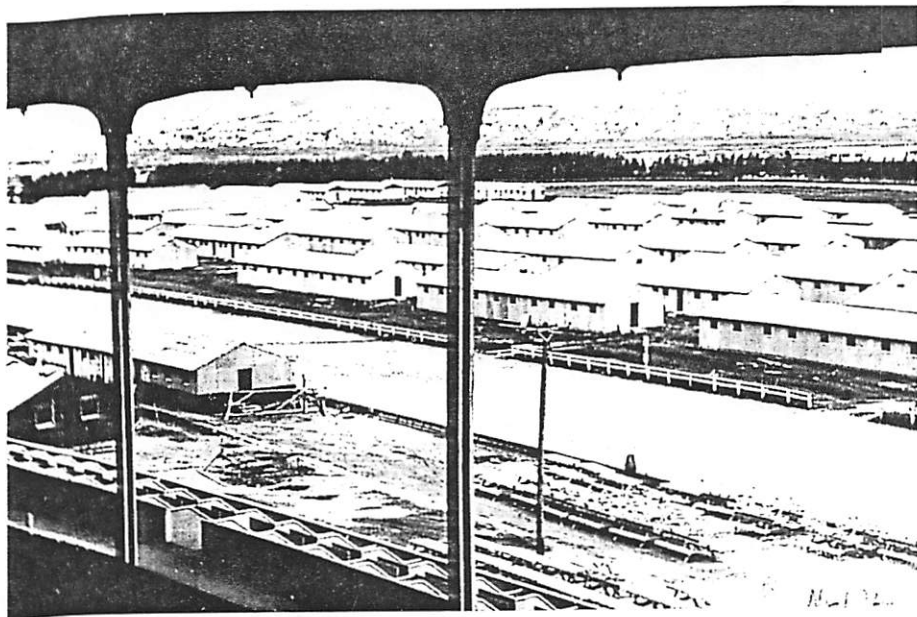
1942. Tanforan Racetrack in San Bruno, CA., an interim holding facility. Events happened so quickly, many internees were forced to sleep in horse stalls while barracks were built.

as youngsters for brief childhood visits or a little schooling. Less than 9,000, however, were Kibei who had received three or more years of education and "indoctrination" in Japan after the age of 13. While most of these passionately and totally rejected Japanese civilization, a few consciously and defiantly identified themselves with it, leading some American authorities to believe that their primary allegiance was not to America but to the emperor of Japan.

As the United States awoke to the devastating reality of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a series of measures were taken which affected these persons of Japanese ancestry. Some 1,500 "enemy aliens" who

were thought to have connections with Japan were immediately rounded up and interned by the Department of Justice; their businesses were closed and their bank accounts "blocked." The remainder, both citizens and aliens, were required to register and carry identification cards and to turn over to local police all "contraband"—cameras, radios, binoculars, and firearms. They were also "frozen" to within a five-mile radius of their homes and required to be in their homes between the hours of 8 pm and 6 am.

In succeeding weeks, as Japan launched successful assaults against the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore, the American public became increasingly suspicious of persons of Japanese ancestry in the United States. Indeed, despite a traditional belief in tolerance and fair play, Americans—particularly



View from Tanforan grandstand showing hastily constructed barracks along the track.

...Americans—had never regarded Japanese immigrants with special favor. Some individuals had long encouraged the view that the Japanese could not be assimilated, that they represented a racially undesirable element in American society, and that they imperiled the nation by their biological fertility.

Of particular influence in the formulation of public attitudes was the widely publicized but completely unsubstantiated rumors of sabotage and fifth-column activity in Hawaii in connection with the Pearl Harbor attack. Fears of enemy submarine activity off the coast of California

added to the mounting sense of panic. Fearful of an invasion of the continent, and increasingly conscious of the dangers of resident Japanese sabotage, citizens on the West Coast demanded strong precautionary measures.

That even the most conscientious Americans were vulnerable to the growing hysteria is illustrated by a column written from San Francisco by Walter Lippmann:

*... the Pacific Coast is in imminent danger of a combined attack from within and from without ... It is [true] ... that since the outbreak of the Japanese war there has been no important sabotage on the Pacific coast. From what we know about the fifth-column in Europe, this is not, as some have liked to think, a sign that there is nothing to be feared. It is a sign that the blow is well organized and*

*that it is held back until it can be struck with maximum effect... I am sure I understand fully and appreciate thoroughly the unwillingness of Washington to adopt a policy of mass evacuation and interment [sic] of all those who are technically enemy aliens. But I submit that Washington is not defining the problem on the Pacific coast correctly... The Pacific coast is officially a combat zone: some part of it may at any moment be a battlefield. No one's constitutional rights include the right to reside and do business on a battlefield. And nobody ought to be on a battlefield who has no good reason for being there.<sup>1</sup>*

On the day after this column appeared seven members of Congress from the Pacific Coast states addressed a letter to President Roosevelt recommending the "immediate evacuation of all persons of Japanese lineage" and other "dangerous" persons from California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. At the same time, Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, commanding general of the Western Defense Command in San Francisco, wrote an urgent letter to the War Department with similar recommendations.

### **The Military Exclusion Order**

At the height of the popular suspicion, distrust, and fear, on February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt acquiesced in

<sup>1</sup> "Washington fails to cope with western fifth column," Salt Lake Tribune, February 20, 1942.

signing the unprecedented Executive Order 9066, under which the Army was given blanket power to deal with the enemy alien problem. General DeWitt then issued Public Proclamation No. 1 designating the entire western half of California, Oregon, and Washington as a "military area," and announced that all persons of Japanese ancestry would eventually be removed from that area "as a matter of military necessity." For the supervision of the evacuation the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA) was established.

What did General DeWitt mean by military necessity? "Essentially, military necessity," his report stated, "required only that the Japanese population be removed from the coastal area and dispersed to the interior where the danger of action in concert during any attempted enemy raids along the coast, or in advance thereof as preparation for a full scale attack, would be eliminated." He then advanced as "reasons" for this unprecedented order that West Coast Japanese constituted a "large, unassimilated, tightly-knit racial group bound to an enemy nation

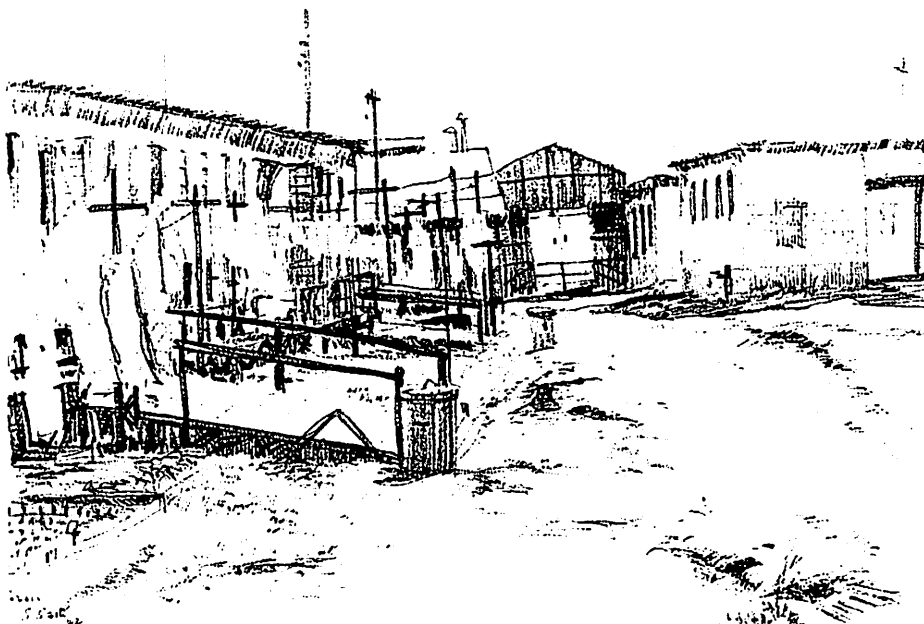


1942. San Francisco bay area Japanese-Americans, most of whom were U.S. citizens, board busses for Tanforan Assembly Center. Luggage was limited to what internees could carry. Most other possessions (homes, cars, property, businesses) were lost or sold at "fire sales" for a fraction of their worth.

by strong ties of race, culture, custom, and religion;" that the group had settled "along a frontier vulnerable to attack," and "virtually always" near vital shore installations and war plants; that there was evidence of suspicious signaling between unidentified persons on the West Coast and the Japanese forces at sea; and that there existed "no ready means" for determining the loyal from the disloyal.

In the more relaxed atmosphere of the postwar years, scholars who have studied the evidence of the times have almost universally concluded the precise opposite;

namely, that the Japanese immigrants and their families had shown a remarkable willingness and ability to adapt themselves to American ways of life and habits of thought; that the basic loyalty of the overwhelming majority was to America; that the construction of the vital defense installations and facilities (airfields, dams, bridges, power lines, oil fields, and railways) had come after the immigrants had settled on available farming land near West Coast cities; and that there was and has been no reliable evidence of any communication between any of these residents and the Japanese forces at sea. As for



1942. Sketch of Tanforan by architect S. Saito. One of many illustrations he made while interned.

the separation of the loyal from the disloyal, no one could possibly have believed that it would have cost more to have had the FBI individually investigate them and segregate the potentially disloyal than it cost the government to feed, clothe, house, and guard all 110,000 of them in detention camps for the duration of the war.<sup>2</sup>

A more probable explanation of General DeWitt's action is indicated by his statement that "a Jap is a Jap... It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen or not; he is still a Japanese..."

The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many... have

become 'Americanized,' the racial strains are undiluted... Sabotage and espionage will make problems as long as he is allowed in this area." The General was so certain that a race of such enemy blood strain must commit sabotage that he stated, "The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> It is estimated that the cost of constructing the assembly centers and ten relocation centers was approximately \$70 million, with virtually no salvage value. The estimated cost of maintaining the evacuees during the three years of detention was \$150 million. The entire direct cost of the evacuation, not counting the loss to the evacuees or the loss to the country of the productive activities in which they would otherwise have engaged, was on the order of \$350 million. <sup>3</sup> See the commentary in the decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth District, August 26, 1949, which declared invalid the renunciations of American citizenship by residents of the Tule Lake Segregation Center; also "Belated justice," Christian Century September 28, 1949, p. 1128. <sup>4</sup> The government's authority to detain alien evacuees was unassailable, but the detention of American citizens was more complex. In the opinion of the solicitor general, this could be done "to whatever extent is reasonably necessary to the national safety in wartime." With respect to a program which singled out Japanese-Americans for detention the solicitor wrote that it was legal provided the discrimination can be shown to be related to a genuine war need and does not, under the guise of national defense, discriminate for a purpose unrelated to the national war effort.

Americans have often been regarded as materialistic, but here is an instance in which they permitted military officers, influenced by anti-oriental pressure groups and unscrupulous competitors, to convert an industrious, productive group, with an annual agricultural and industrial production in excess of \$250 million into "wards of the government and guests of the treasury" at a time when the nation could ill afford to forego the skilled manpower they could supply.<sup>4</sup>

But all this is reasoning after the event. At a time when the nation was deeply absorbed with some of the gravest and most perilous problems in its history, the phrase "military necessity" was sufficient, not only to salve our consciences about action directed at a group solely on grounds of racial ancestry, but also to allay our deep-seated revulsion against the destruction of personal liberties and deprivation of constitutional rights on so broad a scale. The reaction of the ordinary citizen seems to have been that there had to be some-



thing seriously wrong with these people or the Army would not have ordered the blanket evacuation.

Paradoxically, no action was taken to evacuate or intern more than a handful of Hawaiian Japanese, although the Japanese numbered a third more than those on the mainland and comprised 37 percent of the population of that vulnerable territory. Nor was any comparable move made against citizens or aliens of German and Italian ancestry.

### Evacuation

At first the evacuation was voluntary; Nisei and Kibei were instructed to move out of strategic areas on their own. Almost five thousand did move, principally to Utah and Colorado, but the growing suspicion and the general public antagonism in the interior presented many difficulties. General DeWitt and his staff made no effort to prepare the interior states for the voluntary migration which he had encouraged, or to explain why people of Japanese descent were regarded as a hazard in the coastal zone but not in the interior. As a consequence, the Nisei who responded to the General's urging ran into all kinds of trouble. Some were turned back by Arizona border guards; others were met by armed posse's in



1942. Tanforan grandstand by S. Saito.

Nevada; still others were held "on suspicion" by panicky local peace officers. Many were greeted by "No Japs wanted" signs or were threatened by nuclei of angry citizens.

The reaction in Utah, where more than 2,000 persons of Japanese ancestry lived, and to which another 1,500 refugees moved during this period of voluntary evacuation, was not as hysterical as that of her neighboring states; but even here the sentiment was such as to discourage

settlement.<sup>5</sup> Governor Herbert B. Maw, for example, publicly expressed his opposition to their settlement in the Wasatch Front area. "If the federal officials think they are dangerous on the coast," he said, "they would be here." He convened a meeting of county representatives to determine those which would welcome the evacuees and found that all but two were opposed to receiving them. Some of the conferees spoke of the danger of sabotage; others were fearful that the Japanese would get control of Utah's already limited

<sup>5</sup> The largest number settled in a "Japanese town" in Salt Lake City called "Nihonmachi." One of the first groups to move to Utah was composed of 130 Nisei from the Oakland area under the leadership of produce dealer Fred Wada. They leased the 4,000-acre George A. Fisher ranch in Keetley, Wasatch County, and raised vegetables and other produce. They lived in a large two-story apartment building originally erected for miners, and more recently use by summer tourists. Intensely patriotic, they adopted the motto, "Go East, young man and raise food for freedom," and erected "Food for Freedom" billboards along the highway. Another group of migrants to Utah worked on a cooperative basis for the Chipman Livestock Company of Nouman, Idaho.



add  
Kestley  
Wahr

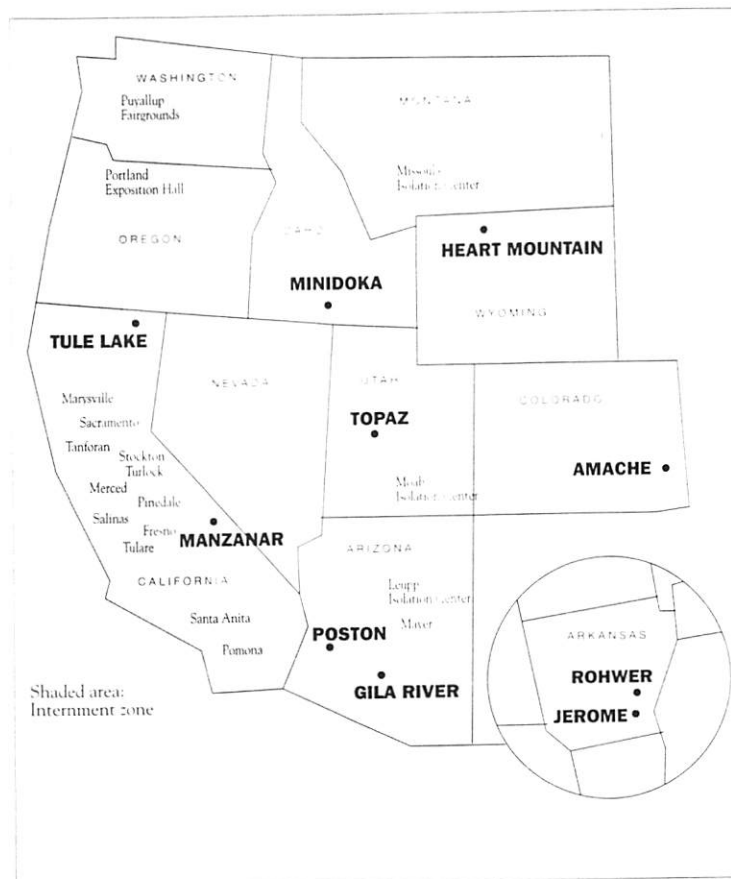
# WAR RELOCATION CENTERS FOR JAPANESE-AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR II (Listed in order of their establishment)

CENTER NAME	LOCATION	OPENING DATE	CLOSING DATE	Peak Resident POPULATION
Manzanar	Manzanar, Inyo County, California	March 21, 1942	November 21, 1945	10,046
Colorado River	Poston, Yuma County, Arizona	May 8, 1942	November 28, 1945	17,814
Tule Lake	Newell, Modoc County, California	May 27, 1942	March 20, 1946	18,789
Gila River	Rivers, Pinal County, Arizona	July 20, 1942	November 10, 1945	13,348
Minidoka	Hunt, Jerome County, Idaho	August 10, 1942	October 28, 1945	9,397
Heart Mountain	Heart Mountain, Park County, Wyoming	August 12, 1942	November 10, 1945	10,767
Granada	Amache, Prowers County, Colorado	August 27, 1942	October 15, 1945	7,318
Central Utah	Topaz, Millard County, Utah	September 11, 1942	October 31, 1945	8,130
Rohwer	McGehee, Desha County, Arkansas	September 18, 1942	November 30, 1945	8,475
Jerome	Denson, Drew/Chicot Counties, Arkansas	October 6, 1942	June 30, 1944	8,497

SOURCE: United States Department of Interior, WRA: A story of human conservation, Washington, D.C., 1946, p. 197 *et passim*. The War Relocation Authority also maintained, during the first four months of 1943, a temporary isolation center near Moab, Utah, and between April and October, 1943, the Leupp Isolation Center, Winslow, Arizona. From March 1944 to 1946 it also operated the emergency shelter for 1,000 European war refugees at Fort Ontario, Oswego, New York.

## Federal Internment Camps, Assembly Centers & Isolation Centers

Assembly centers (small type) were hurriedly constructed while the 10 more permanent internment camps (bold face) were being built. Internees spent approximately 6 months at these temporary holding facilities. The 10 larger camps were all located inland from the coast.





1943. Topaz Internment Camp in central Utah, was laid out in 42 gridded blocks. Each was self-contained with resident barracks, recreational hall, mess hall, laundry, coal pile, latrine & showers, block manager's office, and a single tree. There were 8,130 residents.

One of the unfortunate effects of the expulsion order was the inadequate protection of evacuee property rights. It is estimated that the families affected by the evacuation order had equity in more than \$200 million in property of various kinds. This included about 250,000 acres of lush farming land, some 20,000 automobiles, several thousand businesses, and of course

homes, furniture, art works, bank accounts, and other forms of property built up at great sacrifice over a period of many years. By and large, the evacuees were expected to dispose of this property quickly and individually. Each person was permitted to take with him only what he could carry in his hands, and the government agreed to provide for the storage of property only at the risk of the owner.<sup>7</sup>

Before the evacuation, many were victimized by the unscrupulous. Junk and second hand dealers

often followed on the heels of notifying officers, stating that the government intended to seize Japanese household belongings. Furnishings valued at hundreds of dollars were purchased for four and five dollars. Real estate men, threatening to report Japanese registrants to the FBI if they refused to sell, purchased homes and farms for a fraction of their true value. Ultimately, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco was assigned the responsibility of storing personal property, the

<sup>7</sup> In 1948 a remorseful Congress decided that it had a moral obligation to reimburse the evacuees for some of the property losses. Within the following ten years, more than 26,000 claims were settled, totalling more than \$36 million — about one-third the value of the lost property.

Office of Alien Property Custodian managed their businesses, and the Farm Security Administration supervised the management and disposal of their farms. However, these measures did not counteract initial losses and were inadequate to prevent further losses during the period of exile. By the end of the war, the number of Japanese-owned or Japanese-leased farms had dropped from 7,000 to 2,000, and total income and property losses of all American-Japanese attributed to the evacuation is estimated at \$350 million.

### **The War Relocation Authority**

Upon the issuance of the evacuation order on March 27, 1942, the military began the construction of fifteen "assembly centers" at racetracks, fairgrounds, and livestock exhibition halls near the principal settlements. Between March and June 1942, all citizens and aliens of Japanese descent were transferred to hastily-built barracks at these centers and surrounded by Caucasian military police and barbed wire fences.

Life at these centers was full of the characteristic irritations of military camp life: frequent roll calls, wholesale vaccinations, censorship of mail, lack of privacy, and long lines awaiting service in mess halls, movies, laundry, post



*The Topaz hospital (white buildings) was staffed by prominent Japanese-American physicians, technicians and nurses from the SF Bay area.*

office, and latrines. There were also special restrictions on the use of the Japanese language, and on visitors, and periodic inspection of quarters for such "contraband" as saws, safety razors, radios, liquor, cameras, Japanese phonograph records and literature (including Bibles and other religious works), and firearms. Nevertheless, the tension was relieved by such activities as the repair and landscaping of quarters, planting of victory gardens, and an extensive WCCA recreation program. There were daytime and evening classes, craft and hobby shows, carnivals and concerts, talent shows and dances.

For permanent supervision of the evacuees, President Roosevelt, in an Executive Order dated March 18, 1942, had established the civilian-controlled War Relocation Authority (WRA), with the responsibility of making arrangements to feed the residents, provide the sick with medical care, educate the children, and put the adults to work on useful projects. Anxious to be relieved of the responsibility of caring for the evacuees, the WCCA transferred the 110,000 residents of the assembly centers, during the summer and fall of 1942, to ten newly-constructed barrack cities, known as "internment centers," in far-removed places in seven states. These were administered by WRA.

Milton Eisenhower, coordinator of land use programs in the



Department of Agriculture and brother of the General, was selected to be the first director of WRA. Dr. Eisenhower soon moved on to another assignment and was succeeded, on June 17, 1942, by Dillon S. Myer, assistant administrator of the Agricultural Conservation and Adjustment Administration, who remained in charge of the program from that time until its conclusion. Nearly all of the central and field staff of WRA came from the Department of Agriculture.

The ten barrack camps to which Japanese-Americans were taken by the WCCA were widely scattered. Two were chosen by military authorities in February and March 1942, and turned over to WRA in June. One of these, Manzanar, was located in the Owens

Sept. 15, 1942. Truckloads of internees from Tanforan, via Delta, arrive at the still unfinished Topaz Internment Camp. Wind, heat and dust were immediate problems.

Valley of east-central California on land controlled by the City of Los Angeles as protection for its municipal water supply. The other, Colorado River, was on 72,000 acres of unused Indian reservation lands in the extreme western part of Arizona.

Of the remaining eight chosen by WRA, three were on undeveloped portions of federal reclamation projects: Tule Lake in the Klamath Falls basin of extreme northern California, Minidoka in the Gooding Reclamation Project of south-central Idaho, and Heart Mountain in the reclamation project of the same name in

northwestern Wyoming. Two (Rohwer and Jerome) were located on lands controlled by the Farm Security Administration and purchased originally for the rehabilitation of low-income farm families; one (Gila River) was on sagebrush Indian reservation lands; the Granada center in southeastern Colorado was on privately-owned land purchased for WRA by the Army; and the Central Utah center consisted of a mixture of public domain land, a number of tracts which had reverted to the county during the thirties for nonpayment of taxes, and several privately owned parcels, including some which had been acquired by a New York syndicate during the Depression for failure to pay interest.<sup>8</sup>

In the selection of sites, four considerations were paramount:

1. WRA, interested in a large-scale work program, wanted sites which offered possibilities for extensive agricultural development or for year-round employment opportunities of other types.

<sup>8</sup> There were 19,800 acres in the Utah project, of which 1,400 acres were public domain 8,840 were owned by Millard County, and 9,560 acres were owned privately. The government paid \$1.00 per acre for the Millard County land. Although the site of the Central Utah camp was not chosen until the latter part of June 1942, a report in the Salt Lake Tribune indicates that agents of the War and Justice Departments investigated possible locations as early as February 6, 1942, well before the exclusion order was issued.





2. The Army, concerned with national security and deeply distrustful of the evacuated people, insisted that all sites be located on "wide open" terrain from which escape would be difficult, and "at a safe distance" from strategic installations. The Army also required that all centers be planned for an evacuee population of at least 5,000, so as to minimize the manpower required to guard them.

3. For fiscal reasons, it was desirable to locate the centers on lands which were in federal ownership, or available for federal purchase, so that improvements made at federal expense would not be used to increase the value of private property.

4. The centers had to be located within a reasonable distance of a railhead, with access to a dependable and economical supply of water and electric power.

All of the sites were chosen after appropriate negotiations with state and local officials and acquired by the United States Corps of

Engineers for WRA.

### **Topaz: "Jewel of the Desert"**

The Central Utah Relocation Center was located in the vicinity of Abraham, Millard County, on a bed of the ancient Lake Bonneville — a lake formed in Pleistocene times and connected with the Great Salt Lake. On the older maps it was called "Sevier Desert," but the Paiutes, who had inhabited it for many centuries, called it "Pahvant," meaning "abundance of water." Apparently, before the "white" men diverted the water of the Sevier River for irrigation, there was plenty of water in the streams and many lakes spread over the big greasewood flat.

The first "white" persons to visit the bleak and windy plain,

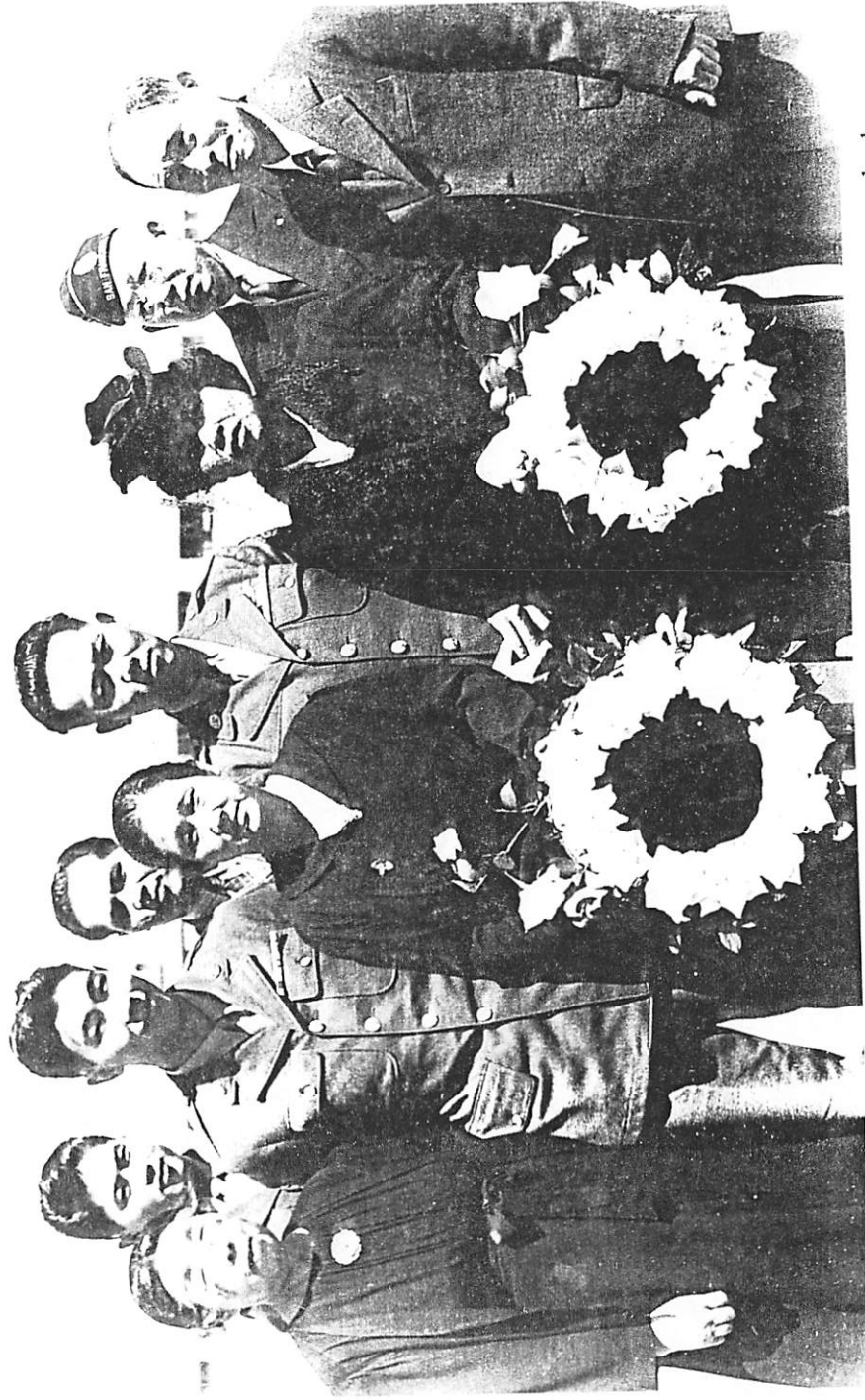
September 1942. Internees are introduced to their home for the next 3 years. Barracks were poorly constructed, lacked insulation and had only a pot-bellied stove for heat. There was no running water in the barracks and a single latrine room served an entire block of 250 people.

Fathers Dominguez and Escalante in 1776, called the area "Valle Solado," or Valley of Salt. This was an apt designation, for even today the Great Pahvant Valley is often referred to as the "Big Alkali Flat." During the intensive search for settlement sites after the Utah War of 1857-1858, a "company" of Mormon pioneers constructed a canal and settled part of the valley, but later abandoned it. Another group returned in the 1870s and

A young Topaz family prepares for their long ordeal in the desert.



Photo: Tokuye Sato



1944. In irony, Gold Star mothers, incarcerated behind barbed wire fences, welcome their U.S. veteran sons -- while at the same time, mourn for sons lost in the war, fighting for America.

1880s, and even formed a corporation to settle the area later selected for the relocation site. But repeated irrigation "turned the soil to alkali," cost-price relationships became unfavorable, and most of the area was once again abandoned to its natural cover of greasewood and saltgrass. The surrounding area

was so desolate in aspect that many visitors remarked that the site must have been chosen to prevent the inhabitants from maintaining contact with the outer world.

The name given to Utah's remote new barbed-wire city came from Topaz Mountain, nine miles northwest of the center. The desert town was sixteen miles northwest of the Union Pacific railroad town of Delta (population 1,500), and about 140 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. Surrounded on all four

sides by mountains, the barren valley in which it was located is 4,600 feet above sea level. The climate ranges from a boiling 106 degrees in summer to a frigid 30 degrees below zero in winter. The rainfall averages between 7 and 8 inches per year. One characteristic of the area is the wind, which keeps up a seldom interrupted whirl of dust. Another is the non-absorbent soil which, after a rain, is a gummy muck, ideal as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

community garden plot. An evacuee cemetery was located southeast of the city but was never used; all of the 144 persons who died at Topaz during the three-year period were sent to Salt Lake City and their ashes held for burial until the return to the San Francisco Bay region after the war.

The administrative area consisted of eight blocks of one-story office buildings, barracks apartments, dormitories with modern conveniences, and a recreation center. In this area was also located a hospital, and a number of maintenance and construction sheds. Approximately 200 Caucasians supervised and staffed the various administrative divisions, half of them from nearby towns. The total cost of operating the center was approximately \$5 million per year, of which \$1.75 million was for personal services, \$2.5 million for supplies and materials, and \$1 million for additional construction, utilities, and clothing grants.

In one corner of the square, behind a barbed wire fence, was a twenty-acre area with the barracks and headquarters of the Military Police, about a hundred of whom arrived just ahead of the first detachment of evacuees. During most of the history of the center there were from three to five officers and from 85 to 150 men.

Guard houses were built at each entrance to the city, and the military police checked the papers and credentials of every person going and coming. Both the city and the entire project area were surrounded by tall, strong barbed wire fences, with watchtower guard houses equipped with searchlights every quarter of a mile manned by patrols of armed guards.

All told, there were 623 buildings, all of uniformly somber aspect except the hospital and administrative buildings, which

*1944. Ella Honderich, a Swedish immigrant and artist, was married to a Topaz worker. She said her sketches were done to record the history of the camp. She was a prolific artist and drew numerous illustrations of camp life.*

were painted white. Water for the project came from three deep-drilled wells at the east side of the area which were capable of supplying 1,300,000 gallons daily. The water was stored in four elevated redwood water tanks—said to constitute the largest wooden water tank in the world—with a total capacity of 500,000 gallons. All reports indicate that the water was almost undrinkable.

All of the housing and administrative areas, civic center, and athletic fields were completed and landscaped by the summer of 1943; i.e., nine months after the residents had arrived. From the Forestry Department of Utah State Agricultural College 75 large trees





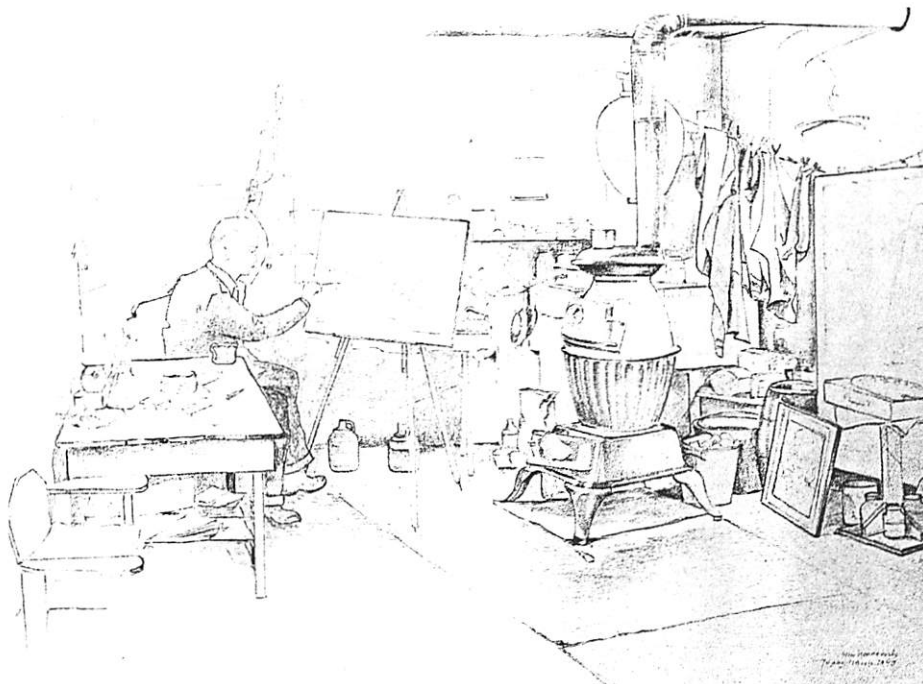
and 7,500 small trees, principally Siberian elms, Utah juniper, Russian olives, and black locusts, were obtained to beautify the center. There were also 10,000 cuttings of tamarisk shrubs, willows, and wild currants. Nearly all the trees and shrubbery died; the alkaline soil, heat, and wind foiled efforts to get grass and flowers to grow.

At the time of occupancy Topaz was only two-thirds completed. There were drafty buildings, crowded barracks, and open trenches, and many suffered until the housing and hospital construction crews could finish their work. In the first months of blowing dust and rain, when the houses had neither ceilings nor inside walls, the people had to sleep and work with faces covered by towels.

Several hundred volunteer evacuees assisted in the weatherproofing of the buildings. Much of the work was held up by shortages of tools and equipment.

### Arrival of Evacuees

The first contingent of evacuees arrived in Topaz on September 11, 1942, and consisted of 214 Nisei volunteer workers. They were immediately assigned to the hospital, kitchen, and transportation crews to prepare for the main influx the following week. The first train load of "regular" evacuees,



1944. Ella Honderich's sketches of Topaz are some of the most definitive visual descriptions of Topaz camp life available.

with 502 aboard, arrived September 16, in a suffocating cloud of dust which hovered over the camp all day. Thereafter, trainloads of 500 or more arrived almost daily until October 15, when the last group arrived. Each busload of new arrivals was greeted by an improvised drum and bugle corps.

All told, 8,255 persons were transferred from WCCA custody to the Central Utah camp in the fall of 1942. These included 7,673 from the Tanforan Assembly Center, San Bruno, California, and 577

from the Santa Anita Center in southern California. With a handful of exceptions, all of the Topaz exiles were from areas fronting on the San Francisco Bay. Sixty-five percent of the population had been born in the United States, which is a higher proportion than in many Utah cities during the nineteenth century. For three years these imported residents comprised the fifth most populous city in Utah.

The director of the Topaz center was Charles F. Ernst, a native of Boston and graduate of Harvard, who had been director of Washington State's program of unemployment relief from 1933 to 1941. He was assistant to the vice



Photo: Tokuye Sato

Four young Topaz ladies shy away from a photographer

chairman of the American Red Cross in San Francisco immediately before the Topaz assignment. He resigned the Topaz appointment in June 1944 to go with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and was replaced by Luther T. Hoffman, assistant chief of the WRA relocation division in Washington who served until the closing of the camp in October 1945. Many Utahns who have since attained prominence—too many to name here—were among those assisting in the administration.

Among the evacuee residents were many interesting and distinguished people. They included Frank Takeuchi, one of the world's great Judo artists and a major attraction in vaudeville; Kantaishi

Nishimura, colorful leader of Utah mining unions during World War I; Nick Iyoya, gentleman bartender and darling of the Bay Region elite who had mixed drinks and exchanged conversation with greats of five continents; Joseph Ito, carnival man and leading concessionaire of the Barnum and Bailey circus; Toshio Asaeda, photographer, ichthyologist, ornithologist, botanist, and adventurer, who had spent a lifetime sketching and photographing the flora and fauna of the South Seas; Yonezo Kamishita, whose exciting career with the United States Navy and Coast Guard had been the subject of several articles in the Sunday supplements; and Chiura Obata, professor of art at the University of California, whose landscapes had delighted a whole generation of art lovers. There was the gardener who

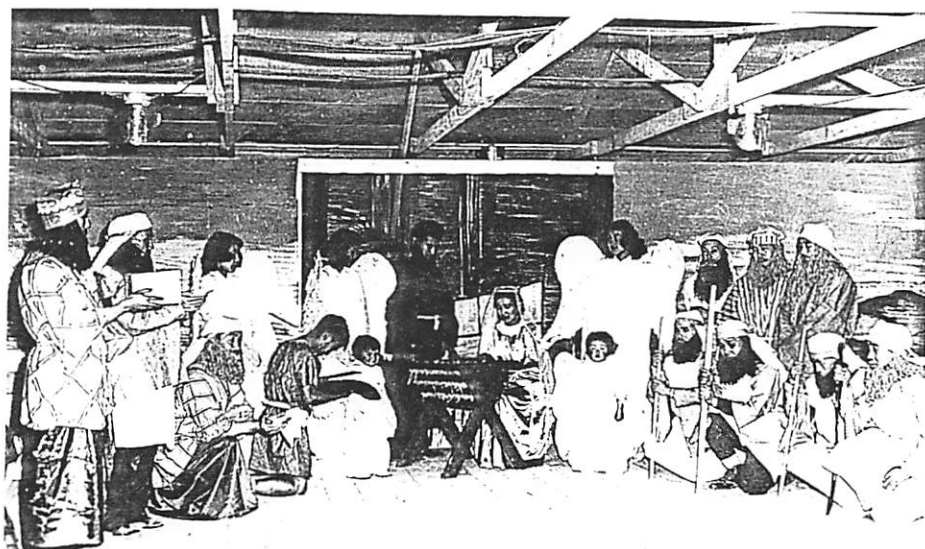
laid out the grounds of the Hollywood homes of Shirley Temple and Charles Boyer, and owner of the Golden Gate Tea Gardens, the chief surgeon of the Los Angeles County Hospital, and the director of a Protestant missionary crusade.

Most difficult to forget, perhaps, was Mine Okubo. At the outbreak of the war in Europe she had won the University of California's highest art honor—a travelling scholarship to Europe. She had hiked and bicycled through a dozen nations before advancing German panzers isolated her in Hungary. Escaping to Switzerland, she worked on a farm until she could borrow enough money to return to the United States, and reached California in time to assist Diego Rivera with murals for the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island. Her first one-man show was held at the San Francisco Museum of Art just before the evacuation. In Topaz she was staff illustrator for the little homespun magazine, *Trek*, and made more than a thousand black-and-white drawings of life in Topaz from which she chose the illustrations for her engaging personal documentary, *Citizen 13660*.

The activities of the Topazans during the first few weeks were much like those of the Mormon



neers who preceded them. The evening after the advance camp and director arrived, there was a mass meeting of residents and administrative personnel in the community hall. In giving the invocation, the Reverend Taro Kato dedicated the center "to the glory of almighty God and to the lifting of His Kingdom." Hereafter, meetings were held once or twice a day to arrange work schedules and work out solutions to many problems. Artists, small businessmen, majordomos, schoolboys, and gardeners were all engaged in digging ditches, clearing the land of greasewood, constructing sheds, planting shrubs, and making furniture for the schools. There was optimism, resourcefulness, good organization, and ambitious plans for the future. "We will survive," said Professor Obata, "if we forget the sands at our feet and look to the mountains for inspiration." Within a week Topaz had established a cooperative general store, a mimeographed newspaper, and reported its first birth, death, appendectomy, dance, religious service, and election. It is clear from all the records that the evacuees, as with early Mormon colonizers, were determined to build a city in this lonely desert region that America would be proud of.



1943. One of the first Christmases in camp featured the Three Kings pageant.

### **Confinement vs. Resettlement**

What was perhaps the most important single decision made by WRA during the war was reached even before the Topaz center was established. It concerned the degree to which the evacuees would be permitted freedom of movement outside the camps. On the one hand, WRA was understandably reluctant to keep them all confined and under heavy guard; on the other hand, public opinion and the military would not permit it to open the gates without strict supervision and control of the evacuees in its charge.

The latter point of view was underscored by the governing

officials of the Western States at an exploratory conference held by WRA on April 7, 1942, in Salt Lake City. The WRA director expressed to the conference his deep concern about the civil liberties of the evacuees and the problem of making effective use of the manpower they represented, and then outlined WRA's plans for the establishment of hundreds of small work camps over the country, with evacuee participation in local and national programs of public works and agricultural and industrial production. The vast majority of state officials, however, insisted on rigorous confinement in some kind of concentration camp, with workers farmed out if at all, under armed guards. Control over evacuees, they felt, should be on the same basis as that of Japanese



1945. Buddhist Church services. Other religious denominations in Topaz were Catholic, Protestant, and Seventh Day Adventist. Photo: Tokuye Sato

provide adequate living quarters at no expense to the evacuees, provide transportation from the center to the place of employment and back, and give assurance that employment of the evacuees would not result in displacement of local labor. State and local officials were required to give evidence that law and order would be maintained. The recruited workers were forbidden to leave the designated area without specific permission from WRA. Many of them had occasional unpleasant experiences because of the widespread public misapprehensions about their

status, but none reported suffering physical harm. It was estimated that they saved enough beets to make nearly 300 million pounds of sugar.

The smooth and successful movement into the beet fields, the obvious waste of manpower in the centers, and the danger in having thousands of American youngsters grow up in an environment that was a fundamental negation of American democracy, led WRA to announce, even before the majority of the evacuees had been moved into the WRA centers, that one of the major policies of WRA would be relocation outside the centers.<sup>11</sup> The program of "outside" employment applied to Issei and Nisei alike, and included short-term

leave, seasonal agricultural leave, student relocation, and "indefinite furlough" for normal residence in any community outside the exclusion zone.

Since Utah was one of the agricultural states with a labor shortage, it is not surprising to find that state officials and farmers made particularly fervent appeals for evacuee workmen. At the time when the Utah center was opened, Governor Maw proposed that all able-bodied evacuees be conscripted into the army and assigned to farm work at military salaries. WRA would not accede to this, of course, but in late September 1942 it did permit the Amalgamated, Utah-Idaho, and Franklin County sugar companies to recruit some 230 laborers for work in northern Utah and southern Idaho. Approximately 300 others were employed during the same fall in apple, carrot, and potato picking, in turkey feather plucking, and in other work of like character. Some 130 Topaz residents were engaged to do construction work and domestic and industrial labor, and a few were called to teach in the

<sup>11</sup> The essential abnormality of life in the evacuee community, and the anomaly of a large segment of America's population being kept in forced confinement in the midst of a war dedicated to the preservation of democratic principles, is perhaps best illustrated in the Topaz story of a small boy who said to his parents: "I don't like it here. When are we going back to America?" Taro Katayama, "Beyond the Gate," *Trek*, February 1945, pg. 2.

one were later removed to the outer fence. Nevertheless, the morale of the camp suffered for more than a year as the result of this unfortunate episode. There was a "blow-up" at the hospital, a strike in the garage repair shop, a plumbing crew sit-down, complaints about the quality of food, and other incidents of a like character which reflected the widespread lack of trust in the camp administration.

The principal consequence of the mass registration was the segregation of the "loyals" from the "disloyals." The project director had recommended that the actively discordant and openly pro-Fascist elements in the camp be separated from the others. (Indeed, he had gone even farther and recommended that the older Issei be separated from the younger Nisei, but this further step was not permitted by WRA.) Tule Lake, which had the largest proportion of the potential segregants already in residence, was chosen as the segregation center, and 1,447 residents of Topaz were moved there in September and October 1943. In exchange, 1,489 residents of Tule Lake who had declared their loyalty to the United States were moved to Topaz. Of the Topazans transferred to Tule Lake, 859 had asked for repatriation or expatriation, 259 had answered

"no" to the loyalty question, 325 were voluntarily accompanying relatives, and 4 were unspecified. Some 385 of the Topaz segregants were Japanese aliens and 1,062 were American citizens.<sup>15</sup>

### Evacuees Employment and Compensation

Milton Eisenhower's emphasis on providing suitable work projects was based on the pressing need for skilled manpower, the need to keep the evacuees busy and maintain their connections with the

American scene, and the need for the Japanese to prove, by constructive deeds, that they were loyal Americans.

The inducements which WRA could provide for its work projects, however, were sharply limited by political pressures and public opinion. Indeed, the national director was compelled to assure Congress that the maximum rate of pay for evacuees working on public projects would not under any circumstances exceed the minimum rate of pay of the American private fighting his country's battles overseas. At the time of the evacuation this was \$21 a month. When Congress raised the soldier's minimum pay from \$21 to \$50,

*1944. Ella Honderich sketch showing camp life. All of the furniture was hand-made since none was furnished by the government. A furniture-making facility was established by internees.*

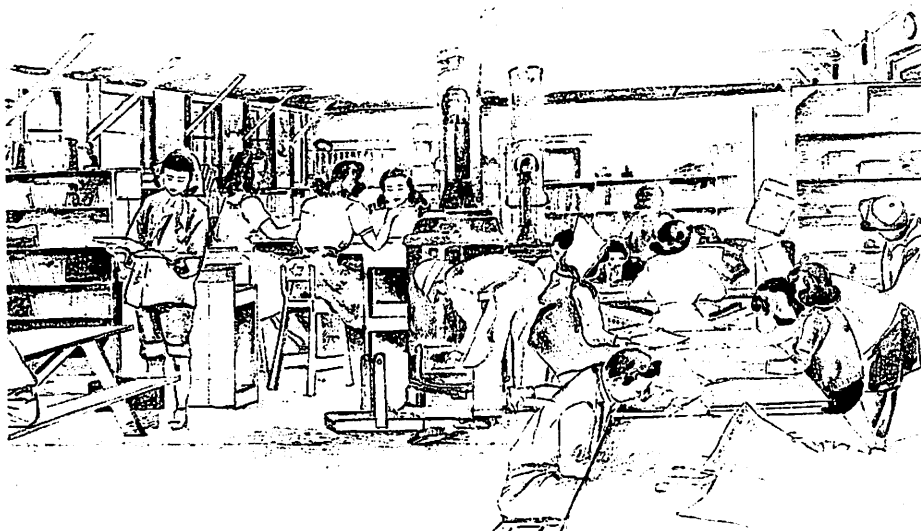


<sup>15</sup> Many of the Topaz renunciants who expressed a desire to go voluntarily to Japan were ultimately sent on exchange ships.

WRA did not see fit to increase its own pay scale, for it had by this time determined to make relocation its most important objective and was inclined to reject any change which might keep the residents tied to the centers.

After considering a plan for the inauguration of profit-making enterprises at the centers, WRA found it ultimately necessary to institute a program of straight compensation for work actually performed under WRA direction. Unskilled labor and persons taking vocational training were paid \$12 a month; skilled labor and the more responsible clerical and community service jobs, \$16 a month; and highly-skilled, highly-responsible, and professional employees, \$19 a month. Food, shelter, medical care, and education were furnished without charge to all evacuees except those who were temporarily employed outside the centers.

The policy also provided for cash allowances at rates varying from \$2.25 for children to \$3.75 a month for persons over 16 to cover costs of clothing for each employed evacuee and each of his dependents. WRA also was able to obtain G.I. clothes left over from World War I to distribute to the workmen. Monthly unemployment compensation payments of \$3.25 for each adult, \$2.75 for a wife, and \$1.50 for a child were made to



1944. Ella Honderich sketch of library. The Topaz library was one of the finest of all the camps serving 2,500 patrons each week. It contained a large collection of cultural literature and native language books.

each employable evacuee (and dependents) who was out of work through no fault of his own.<sup>16</sup> Evacuees working for prevailing wages in seasonal and short-term employment outside the centers received only the standard center rates and the balance paid by the employer was deposited in a trust fund to be administered for the benefit of the whole community.

Within a week after the arrival of the 8,000 residents at Topaz, 2,827 persons (2,199 men, 628 women) were on the payroll under these stipulations. The breakdown in employment was as follows:

Dining hall operations	1,023
Maintenance and construction	634
Project administration	284
Employment placement & housing	166
Health & Sanitation	146
Police Department	132
Transportation & Supplies	132
Community Services & Activities	113
Agriculture	106
Fire department	50
Education	41

Of the total, 2,586, or 91 percent, were in the \$16 group, and 241, or

<sup>16</sup> The provisions for unemployment compensation carried the implication that WRA was obligated to provide jobs for all able-bodied adult evacuee residents who expressed a desire to work. Unquestionably, for several months there was overstaffing, the creation of boondoggling positions, and encouragement of slack working habits. In the late spring of 1943 when work opportunities for evacuees were developing in most sections of the country and the resettlement program began moving into high gear, WRA eliminated unemployment compensation (except for evacuees who had actually been assigned to jobs and were unable to report for work because of illness), and tightened up on its employment procedures.



Other problems were related to the location of the farming lands. The residential area was three miles from the poultry houses, five miles from the swine ranch and vegetable lands, and six miles from the beef headquarters. Much time was wasted walking back and forth

*1944 New Years Eve celebration. The 3-year duration of internment passed slowly, internees attempted to welcome each new year with hope and optimism.*

or waiting for a single truck to carry workers to and from the camp. Added to this was the military police requirement that Caucasian escorts must accompany all persons going to the farms. It was not until the spring of 1944, a year and a half after the camp was settled, that administrators got clearance to establish a central field kitchen with lunches and dinners for the workers.

### Industry and Trade

As with agriculture, the early staff members of WRA intended the centers to enter heavily into the production of industrial goods, but found this goal conflicted sharply with the early decision to make relocation outside the centers the first order of business.

During the early months WRA explored a wide range of potential manufacturing enterprises for the





centers, including the possibility of taking contracts to produce camouflage nets, cartridge belts, tents, and optical lenses. All were items needed by the Armed Forces, involved much labor with skills the Japanese had an aptitude for, and were the kind of industries that would provide an opportunity for them to show their loyalty. The problem in all of these boiled down to the matter of pay—how could the evacuees be paid an incentive wage which would not upset the standard pay scale adopted for the work in the centers? After some experience with privately-operated factories in some of the centers, WRA issued a directive stipulating that an industries must be operated as WRA projects; the establishment of evacuee-sponsored production enterprises was prohib-

*The Dave Tatsuno family.*



ited. It was also specified that all industrial workers would be paid at the standard WRA rates.

Most enterprises actually established were designed to meet the needs of community management or of individual center residents, rather than to produce goods for other centers or the outside market. Thus, the principal Utah enterprise was the furniture factory, which turned out furniture for community buildings. An adobe brick unit made tens of thousands of bricks, and a sheet metal manufacturing unit made roof jacks. Topaz also had an ice cream freezer, a bean sprout plant which produced \$7,000 worth of bean sprouts, and a soybean cake and milk plant which produced \$25,000 worth of tofu.

As with industrial enterprises, WRA found it necessary to forbid the establishment of retail shops and services by individuals and insisted that they be on a consumer cooperative basis. WRA set up standards of organization and membership participation, and laid down general instructions on merchandising, pricing, the distribution of dividends, and auditing. Some direction and

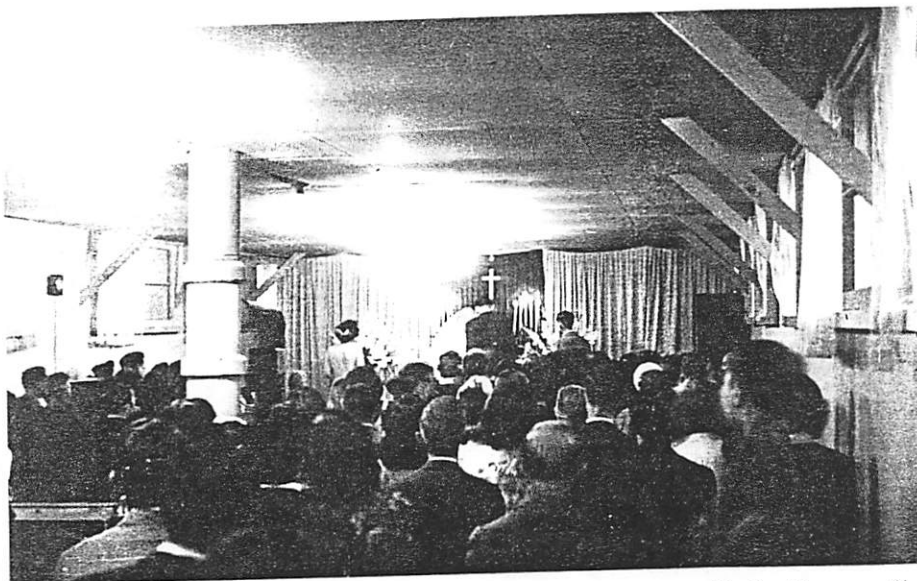


*After the war, many Topaz barracks were sold and used by local residents for farm buildings and homes.*

control by the administrator were necessary because a few of the residents felt that the cooperative stood in the way of getting more free services from the government.<sup>21</sup>

With a membership of more than 5,000, the Topaz Consumer Cooperative Enterprises, Inc., operated a network of individual enterprises, ranging from single-employee watch repair shops to moderate sized department stores stocking a wide variety of merchandise and employing many dozens of persons. Its branches included four canteens or general stores handling drugs, tobacco, hardware, food, and soft drinks at various barracks within the camp; and, in addition,

<sup>21</sup> Some of the older residents suggested that the Topaz Cooperative bankrupt itself by selling below cost and thus force the government to assume a greater responsibility for the welfare of the residents!



1943. Wedding ceremony of Chieko Yamada and Tomate Sakai.

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meteorite, "about the size of a bag of potatoes" but weighing 1,500 pounds, which was the ninth largest meteorite found in the United States and the largest ever found in Utah. It was purchased by the Smithsonian Institution for \$700.

Other evacuees graced their lives during the long months of confinement by creating works of enduring beauty. One of the thriving industries of the last months was the manufacture of miniature shell jewelry—lapel ornaments, brooches, and necklaces. Of the most delicate workmanship, they were made of infinitesimal mussel and snail shells which were harvested from the

ancient bottom of Lake Bonneville. At times a mile-long stretch of toilers could be seen at dawn making its way to the desert location where the best of these shells were found. Patient workers sifted the sands for the tiny shells much as placer miners searched for gold in California. Preserved in the alkali soil for thousands of years, they were washed, bleached, sorted, and tinted before being made into delicate ornaments of extraordinary beauty.

### **The Struggle for Status**

When the evacuees moved into Topaz in 1942, they had reached the lowest status ever experienced by a comparable group of Americans. They had been forcibly removed from their homes, herded

into the nearest approximation to a concentration camp America has ever had, and prohibited from moving about or engaging in the occupational pursuits of their choice. They were not even permitted to join the Army and fight for their country.

To counteract the suspicion, uneasiness, and unreasoning prejudice which had produced this state of affairs, WRA sought to give other Americans the opportunity of observing and mingling with Nisei in the ordinary pursuits of life, and to offer the Nisei the opportunity of serving in the Armed Forces.

The student relocatees, of whom there were 105 from Topaz studying in 43 different colleges and universities, were particularly effective in reminding Americans of the plight of the Nisei. Articulate and thoroughly Americanized, they made good impressions wherever they went, and the reports they sent back to the centers indicated their treatment was far different from that to which they had been accustomed on the Coast. One girl wrote of finding the head of the school waiting in the rain for her when she reached the station at three o'clock in the morning. Another mentioned that she and the other Japanese students were guests at a special welcome dinner given by



1944. Field day games near block 32.

the college president and his wife.<sup>23</sup> The instructions given to the students by a Topaz advisor were the reason for their effective "missionary" work:

*It won't do you or your family and friends much good to dwell on what you consider injustices when you are questioned about evacuation. Rather, stress the contributions of these people to the nation's war effort. Mention the great number of Nisei in the United States Army, the way the Manzanar Boy Scouts protected the American flag from a pro-Axis mob, how the evacuees are engaging in wartime*

*agriculture, and you will do the Japanese in this country more good than talking about discrimination.*<sup>24</sup>

More spectacular were the achievements of two Japanese-American troop units. The first of these, the 100th Infantry Battalion, was composed mainly of Nisei volunteers from Hawaii. A leading participant in the slow, bloody march up the peninsula of Italy, the 100th spent many months in the thick of combat, suffered 300 killed and 650 wounded out of a total of 1,000 men, and won the praises of practically all officers and men

associated with it. It was followed by the 442 Regimental Combat Team which had been formed in 1943 from the volunteers from Topaz and other relocation centers and from Hawaii. All observers classed the performance of this "Go for broke" unit as heroic, ranking with the best in the European Theater. With a normal complement of around 5,000, it suffered a total of 4,430 casualties (including 569 killed in action), and received so many unit and individual

<sup>23</sup> Taro Katayama. "Beyond the gate." *Trek*, February 1943, p. 11. <sup>24</sup> Lillian Ota. "Campus report." *Trek*, February 1943, p. 34.





1944. High school graduation dinner.

"permanent" leave. They went to 98 different cities in 21 states. Four percent entered professional activity, 4 percent clerical, 14 percent agricultural, 24 percent joined the ranks of skilled and semi-skilled labor, and 32 percent went into the service trades. The most popular area of relocation nationally was Chicago, because it had millions of people, abundant employment opportunities, and a noticeable absence of anti-oriental feelings.<sup>26</sup>

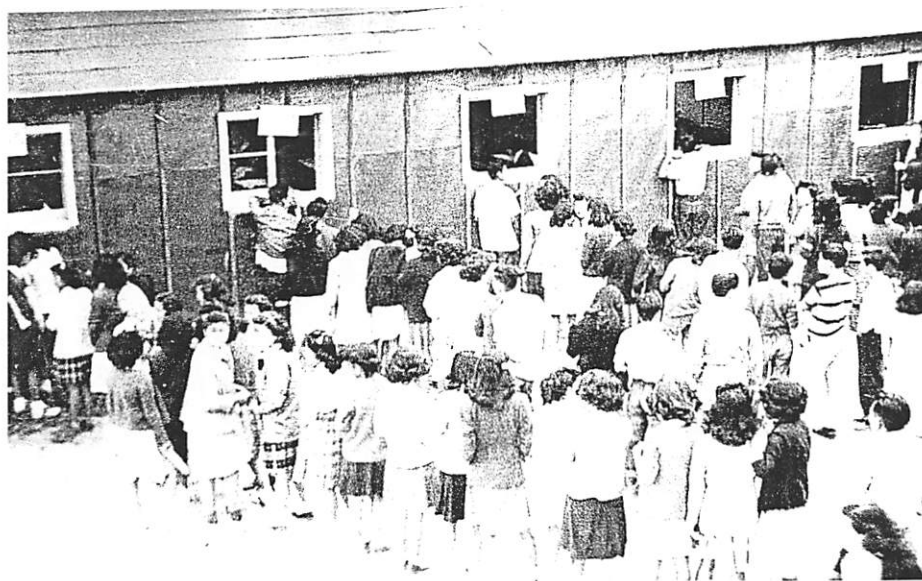
Although many Topazans also settled in the Chicago area, the local favorite was the Wasatch Front, where a small but reasonably well-established Japanese popula-

tion had existed since before the war, and where many voluntary evacuees had located. Additionally, the evacuees and relocation field officers were convinced that Mormons, perhaps because of their own turbulent history, were disposed to be tolerant of persecuted minorities.<sup>27</sup> Many of the evacuees who went out on seasonal leave to beet fields during 1942 and 1943 eventually gravitated into

Salt Lake City and found year-round jobs. Some 250 residents of the various centers were also recruited to work at Utah's Tooele Ordnance Depot, and 150 from Topaz were sent to the Sioux Ordnance Depot at Sidney, Nebraska. All of these were instructed to take their families and become integral members of the communities.

All together, within the first year of relocation, 1,700 Nisei from Topaz and other centers entered the mainstream of American life in Utah. During the entire period of exclusion (1942-1946), 5,641 evacuees relocated in Utah. Of these, 2,002 settled in Salt Lake City, 900 in Ogden, 351 in Brigham City, 278 in Clearfield, and 241 in Tooele. Considering the 2,210 who were living in Utah at the outbreak of the war, the relocatees hiked Utah's resident population of persons of Japanese descent to 7,851. Many of these left the state in the years after the war as brighter employment opportunities developed elsewhere. By 1950 there were only 4,452

<sup>26</sup> WRA directors reversed Horace Greeley's maxim and advised: "Go East, young man, go East." <sup>27</sup> In August 1942, before the opening of the Topaz center and during the period when extensive agricultural leaves were being granted, WRA asked the Western Institute of Public Opinion in Los Angeles to make a public opinion survey in Utah on "the Japanese question." In a poll of 5,000 Utahns, 66 percent expressed approval of a policy permitting citizen Japanese to leave the relocation centers and accept outside employment. Only 18 percent approved of alien-Japanese being permitted to work outside the centers. Of those who favored permitting Nisei to work outside the centers, only 52 percent favored having them in the immediate vicinity where the interview took place. Unfortunately, there is no way to compare this with the attitude elsewhere, since no similar survey was taken in other states. Various WRA administrators, however, expressed the conviction that the reception in Utah would be and was relatively friendly.



1944. High school graduation. Students line up to receive school yearbook.

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Topaz Community Council sponsored an all-center conference, held in Salt Lake City in February, with council representatives from all centers except Manzanar and Tule Lake. The conference ended with a plea for more extensive relocation assistance. Overlooking the deadening effects of the institutional life of the centers, and stressing the difficulties which would be confronted by the older Issei upon their return, the delegates raised serious questions as to the fundamental wisdom and morality of closing the centers. It was cruel of WRA, they declared, to force these people to return without substantial help. WRA took a firm stand, however, and

quietly insisted that the centers would be closed.

There were about 6,000 evacuees in Topaz at the time, and many meetings were held to explain WRA policy. An Army recruiting team interviewed the residents of questionable loyalty and recommended 250 of them for individual exclusion orders or further investigation and possible internment. All of the remainder were cleared, on January 20, 1945, for free movement anywhere in the United States. Nevertheless, only 134 residents were relocated in January 1945, compared to 126 in the same month of 1944—and only 38 of the 134 returned to California. There was a definite increase in the medical cases due to worry over the closing of the

center.

Topaz officials, however, went doggedly ahead with their plans to close the center. The first reserved trains left for Chicago on May 14, and others followed in a regular schedule. As a step in liquidating the agricultural section, bids were issued for leasing the surplus farm lands until such time as the center would close, and the surplus farm equipment was sold at an auction at which more than a hundred certified dealers were in attendance. The educational program was ended with commencement exercises in June, and the teachers were discharged or transferred to other work. The classes in adult education and vocational training were terminated in July.

One problem which concerned the administration was the tendency for the evacuees to want to put off relocation until the last few days before closing. Since the war in Europe was about over, troops were being redeployed to the Pacific, straining transportation facilities to the utmost. It was conceded that there was little likelihood WRA would be able to commandeer the trains to transport the entire evacuee population to their desired location in one grand last-minute rush. To encourage moving, therefore, the national office announced in June that all centers except Tule Lake would be



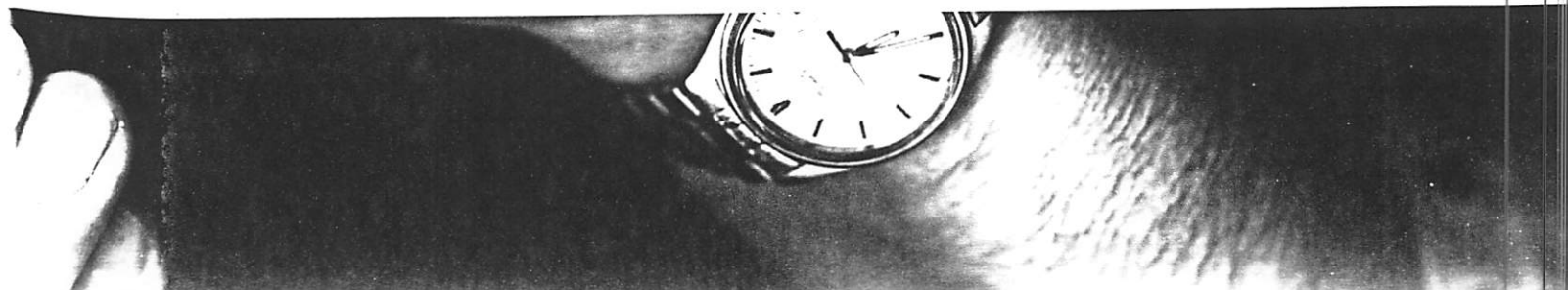
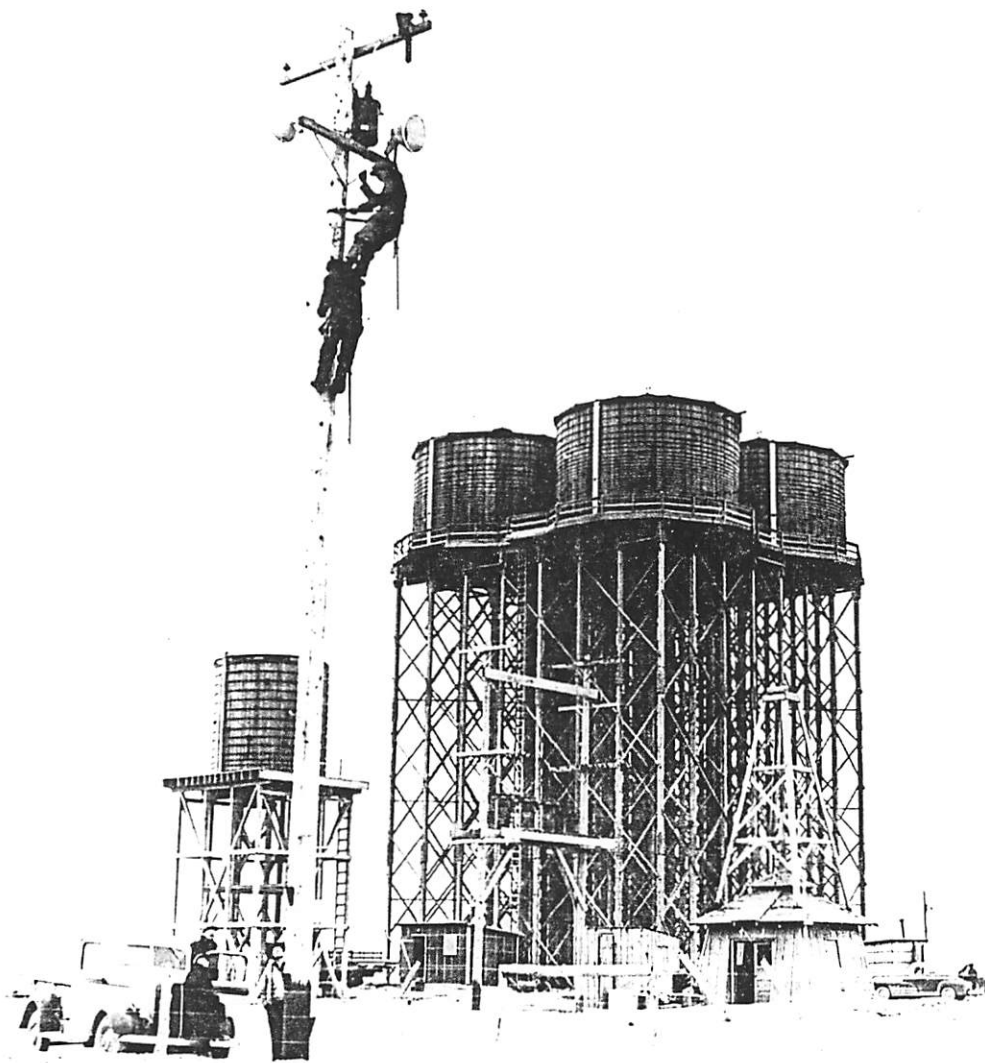
closed between October 15 and December 15, 1945. Each project director was instructed to establish weekly quotas for relocation in order to meet the goal of depopulation by the closing date. These quotas were to be filled, as far as possible, by volunteers; but if the quota could not be filled in this manner, the director was authorized to complete the lot by assignment. Those assigned a departure date were given the option of selecting the place where they wished to relocate. Individuals refusing to make a selection were to be given a rail ticket to the community from which they were originally evacuated. Those who refused to pack their belongings were to have their property packed for them, and they were to be escorted to the train—if

necessary, by the internal security police. This threat of physical force was regarded as the only feasible alternative to an indefinite extension of the program.

*1943. Water was stored in giant redwood elevated tanks, said to be one of the largest in the world. 500,000 gallons of water were stored in 4 tanks.*

sion of the entire center program.

The scheduling notice was issued just two weeks before V-J day and was actually announced to the evacuees only a few days before that event. This fortunate timing (entirely unpremeditated!) broke





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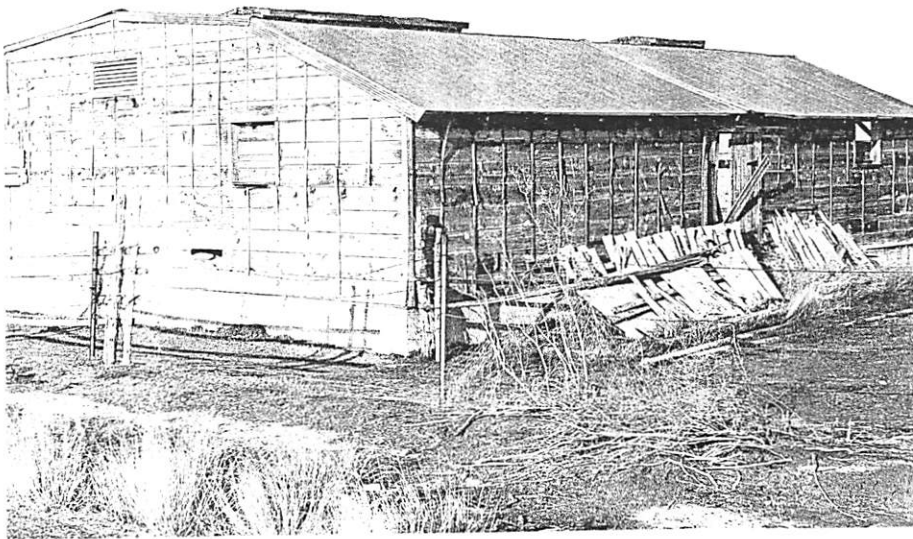
#### *1944. Field day games.*

down the last real vestiges of evacuee resistance to the schedules. Even the most rabid diehards were now convinced that a return to private life was inevitable. The first train carrying Topaz evacuees to the West Coast left Delta on August 15—just five days after V-J day—and the final closing date was announced to be October 31.

The speed of the evacuation now depended on the availability

of housing. The Public Housing Authority operated under instructions to provide housing only for returning veterans, but WRA field offices were eventually able to arrange for some surplus Army facilities and trailers in the vicinity of Los Angeles and San Francisco. In addition, the Buddhist Church of Topaz directed an aggressive program of relocation and housing assistance for members of that faith. By September, the outward

movement was in earnest. There was a breakdown in work morale, a letdown in productive work, and a lack of concern for maintaining center activities. In October the last meeting of the Community Council was held, the block managers' organization was dissolved, and a farewell banquet was held in Delta. The last special train left on October 26, with 325 aboard. Five days later, the center closed on schedule with the project



1966. Recycled mess hall building used for farm equipment storage.

to accept Japanese-Americans as union members. Happily, almost all such instances of discrimination were short-lived.

In Utah, the reception given returnees was conditioned by the attitude of the dominant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A number of the evacuees had become members of the church during their residency at Topaz, and they were given special relocation assistance by a Church Newcomers Committee established for the purpose early in 1945. While the chief authorities of the church (and most sub-authorities) taught and practiced tolerance, a few local leaders opposed reloca-

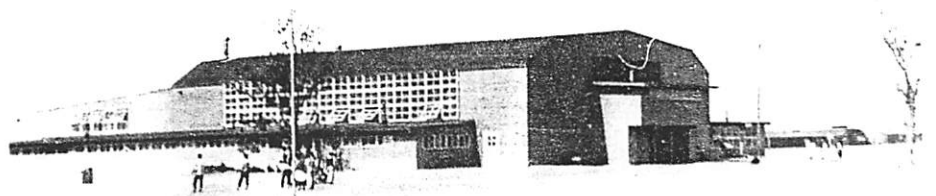
tion. In a town in the Upper Snake River Valley, where a number of Nisei and Issei families joined the large number already there, a member of the local "stake presidency" took the lead in organizing a group opposed to the sale of real

1944. Topaz high school gymnasium, located in the center of the camp, provided a facility for recreation, movies, graduation ceremonies and social gatherings.

estate to Japanese. This group brought sufficient pressure to bear on real estate agents that in some cases where the sale of property was in process the money was refunded to the buyer. To counteract this form of discrimination on the part of local leaders the general authorities of the L.D.S. Church, on December 4, 1945, issued a policy statement published in the church-owned *Deseret News* decrying "these foolish prejudices."

Reports coming to this office [the editorial said] declare that in outlying districts these Japanese-Americans find a lack of warmth that is not evident in the more urban communities. In some sections, protests have been registered against leasing land to Japanese or those of Japanese ancestry. From another section came the report that the ranchers needed labor this fall, and were willing to have Japanese labor imported, but they did not want the Japanese boys and girls attending the schools where their own children were students.

The prejudices went even farther than that, however. In one community efforts were being made to raise money necessary





to buy more books for the library and much difficulty was being experienced in getting the necessary funds. Finally someone thought of going to two or three Japanese families to solicit them for funds, and the response of these people was so generous that the solicitors decided there must be something crooked in it and reported the generous donations to the sheriff....

Americans who are loyal are good Americans whether their ancestors came from Great Britain or Japan, the Scandinavian countries or Germany. Let us, therefore, endeavor to banish these foolish prejudices from our natures and let us attempt to see that all good and loyal Americans are treated as such.

Today, twenty years after the evacuation, 60 percent of the persons of Japanese ancestry in the continental United States live in California, compared with 75 percent in 1942. Illinois, which had only a few hundred in 1942, has 15,000, and many other states in the East and Midwest show similar increases. The congested "Little Tokyos" have been dispersed, and the Japanese people have shown a greater spirit of independence in moving out of their own circles. On the Coast there are still some segregated churches and communities with their own clubs and social life, but they are rare and becoming rarer. Persons of Japanese descent have found friendliness, hospitality, more freedom of occupation, and few



1943 Topaz teachers. Included: Ellen Henderson, Lottie, Vera Black, Mrs. Merrill, Ed Harris, Eloise, Eleanor Gerard Sekerak, Liz Boardman.

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1944. Graduation ceremonies were held in the Topaz high school gymnasium.





*Legal/constitutional phases of the Utah program*

*The relocation program*

*Token shipments:*

*The story of America's war refugee shelter*

*Wartime exile — The exclusion of the Japanese Americans from the West Coast*

*Wartime handling of evacuee property*

*People in motion: The post war adjustment of the evacuated Japanese Americans*

The Army's role in the evacuation movement is described in Final Report. Japanese evacuation from the West Coast, of the Western Defense Command, Washington, 1943. The evacuation is also reported in National defense migration, 77th Congress 2nd session, Report of the Select Committee investigating National Defense Migration, House Report 1911, Washington, 1942; and National defense migration, 77th Congress, 2nd session, House report 2124, Washington, 1942.

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Eaton, Allen H. *Beauty behind barbed wire: The arts of the Japanese in our war relocation camps*. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1952.

Grodzins, Morton. *Americans betrayed: Politics and the Japanese evacuation*. Chicago, IL., The University of Chicago Press, 1949.

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1943. Digging ditch for the co-op soda fountain pipe. Included: Sam Furuichi; Toby Karuma; Dave Tatsuno, dry goods manager; Toby Ogawa, general manager.

Lind, Andrew W. *Hawaii's Japanese*. Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1946.

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A complete documentary record of the activities of WRA is found in the National Archives and in the University of California Library at Berkeley. The latter, which was used by the writer, includes general manuscript histories of the various divisions, reports, center newspapers and magazines, scrap-books, and other material from the general office of WRA and from each of the ten relocation centers. The material at Berkeley is catalogued in *Japanese American evacuation and resettlement: Catalog of material in the General Library* by Edward N. Barnhart, published by the University of California Press in 1958. Some personal papers (diaries, letters, etc.) are catalogued but are not available to the researcher.

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1976. A Bicentennial program sponsored by Utah Nikkei raised funds and built an historic marker at the Topaz site. Another marker was placed in a downtown park in Delta, giving a brief history of internment, and map instructions to visit the site.

1944. Topaz garden in the desert.

## PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS

A complete set of the *Topaz Times* (September 17, 1942—August 31, 1945) is available in the University of California Library at Berkeley, as are the three numbers of *Trek*, an art and literary magazine published by the Topaz evacuees. Articles from these publications, as well as from the *Deseret News* and *Salt Lake Tribune* (Salt Lake City) and *Millard County Chronicle* (Delta), have been used extensively in preparing this lecture. Many articles have been published in national magazines dealing with the subject. Among the most useful have been:



...it, Ariel S. "Reactions to laborers  
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October 1944.

...hart, Edward N. "The individual  
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31: 111-130. May 1960.

...dated Justice." *Christian Century*,  
September 28, 1949, p. 1128.

...guised blessing." *Newsweek* 52:  
December 29, 1958.

...er, Galen M. "Japanese colony:  
success story." *Survey Graphic* 32:  
48. February 1948.

...sei, Nisei, Kibei." *Fortune* 29: 8 ff.  
April 1944.

...wata, Masakazu. "The Japanese  
immigrants in California agriculture."  
*Agricultural History* 36: 25-37.  
January 1962.

...Evoy, J.M. "Our 110,000 new  
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Los Angeles by the Japanese American  
Citizens' League.

...ostow, Eugene V. "Our worst wartime  
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201. September 1945.

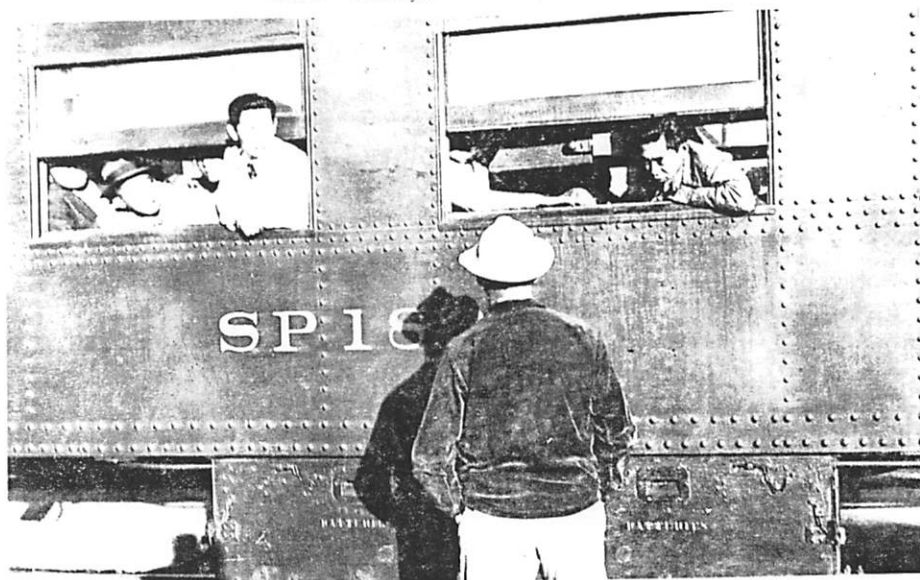
...Smith, Elmer R. "The 'Japanese' in  
Utah." *Utah Humanities Review* 2: 129-  
144. 208-230. April, July 1948.

...Tani, Henry. "The Nisei since Pearl  
Harbor." *The Pacific Spectator* 1: 208-  
218. Spring 1947.



1942. Tanforan internees prepare for long trip to central Utah, site of Topaz.

1942. Trains transported internees from Tanforan to Delta,  
Utah -- and after the war, took the internees to Salt Lake City.







1942. Kindnesses are shown by refreshments offered to children bound for Tanforan, by the Quaker and Baptist churches.



1944. Dillon S. Meyer was director of WRA from 1942 to conclusion. Its first director was Milton Eisenhower.

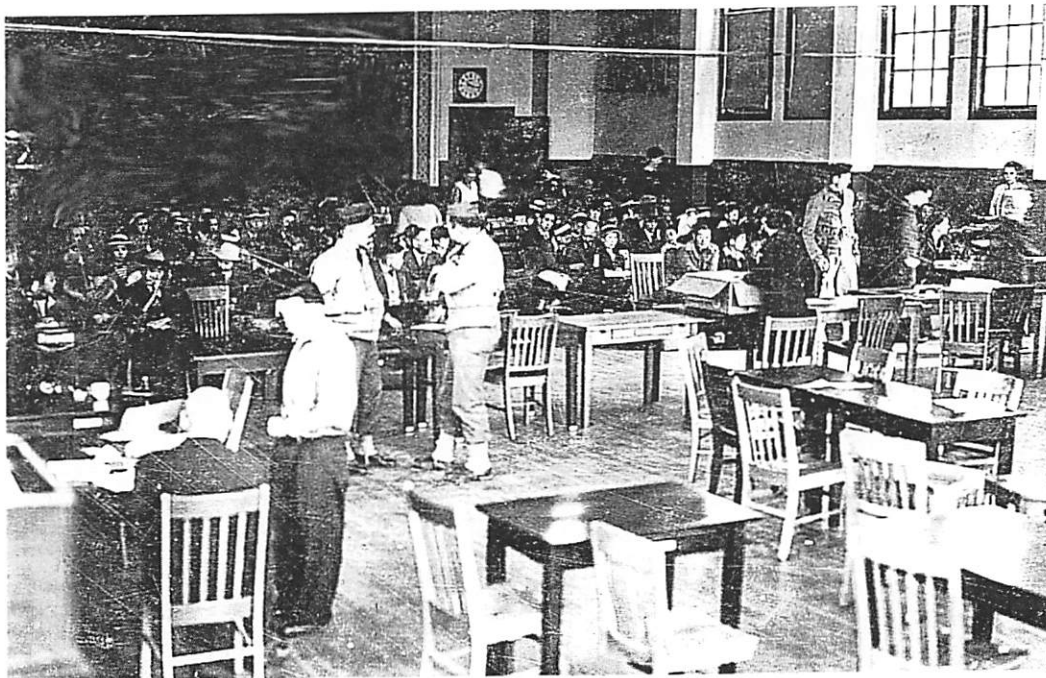
1942. Internees pause for a picture, while getting their first glimpse of Topaz.



1943. Charles F. Ernst was director of Topaz. He was an executive with the American Red Cross in San Francisco.



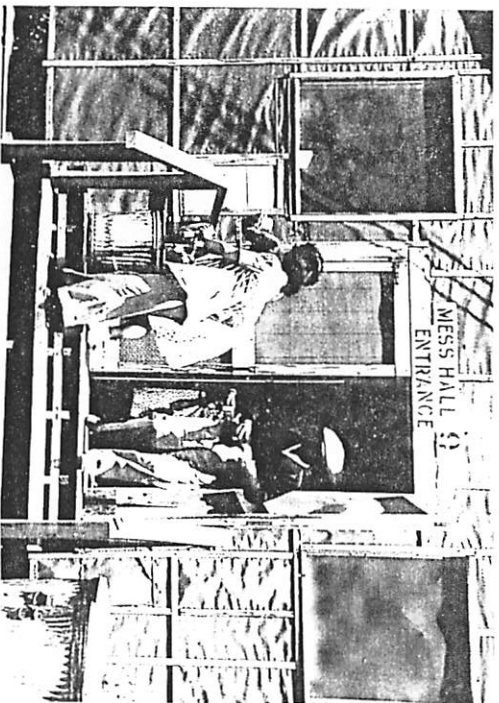




1942. Registration office at Kimon Gakuen. Note armed soldier.



1942. After being held for 5 months, residents of Tanforan board train for Delta, Utah and Topaz. They were allowed to take only what they could carry.



1942. Tanforan mess hall. Internees clean their plates on the way out.



1943. Tanforan had an extensive library with experienced librarians.



1942. Watched by military MPs, internees board bus on Buchanan Street for Tanforan Assembly Center in San Bruno.

TWENTY-FIFTH FACULTY HONOR LECTURE  
DELIVERED AT UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY April 26, 1962

A basic objective of the Faculty Association of the  
Utah State University, in the words of its constitution, is

- To encourage intellectual growth and development of its members by sponsoring and  
arranging for the publication of two annual faculty lectures in the fields of*  
(a) *the biological and exact sciences, including engineering, called the Annual Faculty Honor Lecture  
in the Natural Sciences, and*  
(b) *the humanities and social sciences, including education and business administration, called the  
Annual Faculty Honor Lecture in the Humanities.*

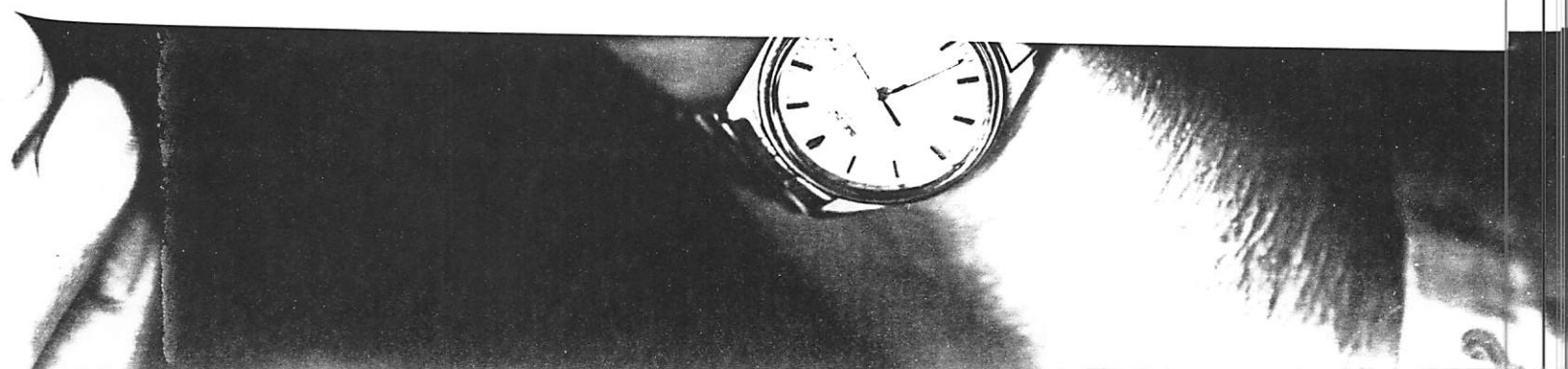
The administration of the University is sympathetic with these aims and shares the  
cost of publishing and distributing these lectures. Lecturers are chosen by a standing  
committee of the Faculty Association. Among the factors considered by the commit-  
tee in choosing lecturers are, in the words of the constitution:

- (1) *creative activity in the field of the proposed lecture;*
- (2) *publication of research through recognized channels in the fields of the proposed lecture;*
- (3) *outstanding teaching over an extended period of years;*
- (4) *personal influence in developing the characters of students.*

Dr. Arrington was selected by the committee to deliver the Faculty Honor Lecture in  
the Humanities. On behalf of the members of the Association we are happy to  
present this paper:

THE PRICE OF PREJUDICE:  
THE JAPANESE-AMERICAN RELOCATION CENTER  
IN UTAH DURING WORLD WAR II.

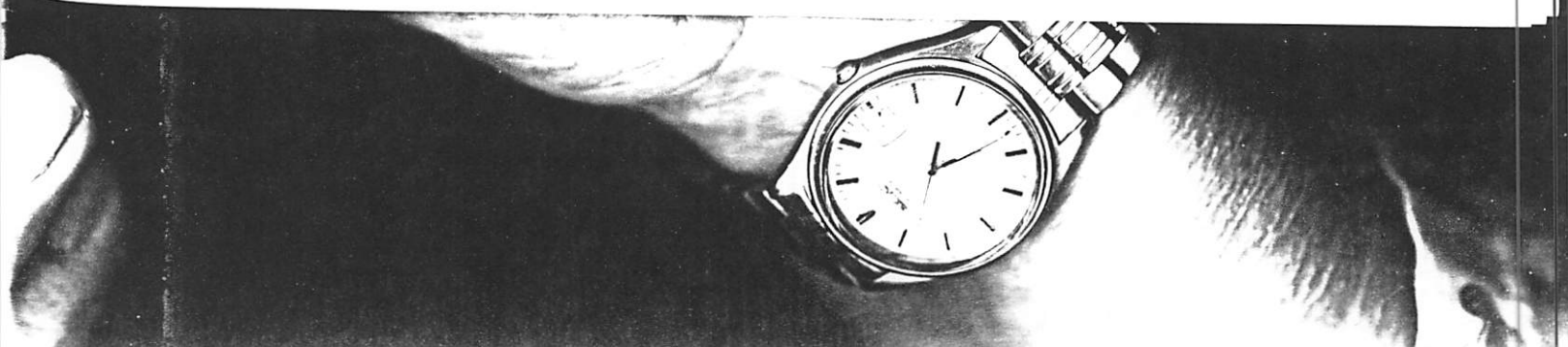
Committee on Faculty Honor Lecture



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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

A monetary sum and words alone cannot restore lost years or erase painful memories; neither can they fully convey our Nation's resolve to rectify injustice and to uphold the rights of individuals. We can never fully right the wrongs of the past. But we can take a clear stand for justice and recognize that serious injustices were done to Japanese Americans during World War II.

In enacting a law calling for restitution and offering a sincere apology, your fellow Americans have, in a very real sense, renewed their traditional commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. You and your family have our best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. H. W. Bush".

GEORGE BUSH  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 1990

(Letter of apology and restitution issued to each surviving internee.)

